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THE

CHILDREN'S BOWER;

OR,

WHAT YOU LIKE.

BY KENELM HENRY DIGBY.

Sæpe sub exiguo munere magna latent.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER ROW.
1858.

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Divinity School.
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THE

CHILDREN'S BOWER,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

N a fine day, amidst all the triumph of the summer's youth, in a southern county of England, some strangers are passing outside the wall of a well-wooded park,

"Nunc frondent silvæ, nunc formosissimus annus."

The nightingale, the cuckoo, and the linnet, have long opened the beautiful season in these groves; the lark is singing over head; only the heat at this hour suspends the full concert.

"The birds are chirping faintly,
It scarcely is a song;
But the breath of green creation
And fragrant life is strong.
The lazy trees are nodding,
The flowers are half awake,
And toilsome men are basking
Like the serpent in the brake *."

It is Wednesday, the 2nd of July, 1856. But, lo! something

* Blackie.

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must have happened lately in the neighbourhood not in visible accordance with this smiling serenity of nature. Many young men and other persons are standing silently in groups under the shade, collected round the ivy-bound gate of a long poplar avenue which leads to a great house, which is the well-known seat of an old historic family. A priest clad in his vestments and many acolytes and children are waiting about the lodge, ready, it would seem, to do all rites that appertain unto a burial. Several soldiers too are straying about, while others of their company are expressing regret that they can wait no longer, as duty calls them elsewhere. The strangers stop and join the groups, as if they had no other occupation but to observe. At length, about two o'clock, between the dusky trees and along the road through the open green, comes gliding on serene and slow, soft and silent as a midsummer day's dream, a funeral procession. There is a hearse with four tired horses and white trophies, preceded by tall bending vapoury plumes that wave their swan-like purity over the summer corn. There are two coaches, and all the horses seem to have come from far. The broad gate swings on its hinges. Some mourners alight. If there was a diviner of the future to whisper in your ear, you would take especial notice of that tall, well-timbered, and handsome youth, wearing over his deep black a white scarf. As it is, they who know him remark his graceful noble air, and think that it never struck them more forcibly than at this moment. More of him anon. You would say now how well he looks. You do not yet see death about him. This is not your induction; I will undraw the curtains of the tragedy hereafter, and then we shall find that the impression of which I speak at present was an affecting instance of what the old Greek mind was fond of observing; but we must not suppose ourselves at present competent to make any such reflections; we must attend only to what is actually passing before us. Then from the second carriage some women descend, all clad as maidens in their silver livery, as if with mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage, in equal scale weighing delight and dole. The coffin of an ivory hue, as if white to figure purity, is then taken out and borne on men's shoulders. The priest receives it processionally, and all move on, singing as they walk the funeral

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chant appropriated for those peace-parted souls who died in their innocence. Hence the mystery of this mourning with a double face. The Psalm, "Praise the Lord, ye children," is entoned with a clear voice; and to that music the little train moves up the avenue.

"How like a gentle stream shaded with night
And gliding softly, with our windy sighs,
Moves the whole frame of this solemnity!
Tears, songs, and blacks filling the simile."

The view on both sides of the leafy aisle, which is fragrant with the perfume of a thousand flowers, that grow within an open garden on one side of it, is smiling as if in spite of death. The groves at least seem happy.

"Non canimus surdis; respondent omnia silvæ."

And, in fact, those who follow the train said later, that after a long journey along scorching roads and across vast open shadeless plains, and latterly through the streets of an adjacent city filled with strange faces, where, though all respected no one recognized as his own the symbols of their ancient faith,—on coming to this spot, where for ages it had reigned uninterruptedly, and where so many friends were waiting for them with their hymns, encompassed with the charms of nature, that seemed to join in with its own responsive voice, they felt as if they had reached the gate of that Paradise which was to receive the little one.

But let us mark all as if we were unconcerned spectators. They move on. Observe their order. First glides the processional cross, with its attendant acolytes carrying lighted tapers in their hands. Then

"Village girls in robes of snow
Follow, weeping as they go;
No where is a smile this day,
No, ah no! for each one seems to say:
'The roads should mourn, and be veiled in gloom,
So fair a corpse now leaves its home!
Should mourn and should weep, ah, well-away!
So fair a corpse should pass to day!'"

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The song is then changed to our Lady's litany; the clergy preceding the body close the procession, which is like the subject of it, simple,—acolytes and schoolboys, a few women mourners in white, and thoughtful-looking soldiers compose the chief part of the train; but the avenue is lined on each side with people that in the burning sun walk with forgetful sadness. Arrived at the chapel, which adjoins the house, the coffin is laid down in front of the altar. An aged priest who had come with it places on it wreaths of flowers, while round it are arranged the customary lights. Then the choir sings, "Praise ye the Lord from the heavens," and the organ, causing long pent-up tears to burst forth, accompanies the chant. After this little office the procession is formed toward a monumental cave of death behind the altar, of which the marble door that leads beneath is now wide stretched, staring on us with unfolded leaves. Here the coffin is sprinkled with holy water, and the cold vault fumed with incense. The poor remains are then deposited in their sacred resting-place, the priest taking off his own sacerdotal girdle, to offer it to those who let it glide down, as if he thought nothing too precious to use on such an occasion.

> "Sorrows mingled with contents prepare rest for care;
> Love only reigns in death; though art
> Can find no comfort for a broken heart."

The priest and his attendants return to the altar, singing the Canticle of the Three Children, "All ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord;" and then turning to the people, he speaks a few simple words, which for aught a stranger knew might or might not be commonplace, while he seems to struggle with himself, as he looks at some before him, saying, "Noli flere, noli flere, melior est dies mortis quam dies nativitatis."

> "It grieves me that a tear should fall upon him,
> Being a thing so joyful, but his memory
> Will work it out I see."

Then he adds, that though this was the funeral of one mourned with uncommon sorrow, the whole ceremony they had witnessed was intended to signify that this child had died in the Lord, and was therefore blessed for ever. Then he said with great

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solemnity, as if weighing each word before he gave it utterance, that this little one, though he had only lived eight years, deserved a few words about him from that place to be spoken before they separated; he tells them that he had possessed a degree of intelligence and discretion far beyond his age, that he had combined a sense of religion and goodness, which attracted the deep attention of those who knew him; that really heaven seemed about him, and yet that he had all the innocent graces of common youth, so that wherever he entered joy seemed to come in with him. He then says slowly and gravely, that this child was never known to have committed a single fault. He says he speaks on the best authority; he adds, that his love of truth broke out on the slightest occasions, and that nothing could ever induce him to do what he thought he ought not to do; at which he stops and looks around him: then he continues, he was loved at home as a child, and as a brother; abroad, as a little stranger, pleasing and edifying all who saw him; while those intimate with him, who meditated on his piety, could not help revering him, as if he had been already in some sort an angel. He then, in a very artless way, on his own behalf, and particularly on that of the afflicted family, thanks his audience for their kind and consoling attendance, and begs of God to bless them all. He says it was in consideration of the character of the deceased, that his parents thought it their duty to pay what poor honours they could to his remains; and that it was with the same intention, not exclusive of a generous and human sympathy, the family of this manor had placed them in their chapel of St. Stephen. As if just coming from his books, the good man wished them to understand that all this little pomp was but an innocent thing, and no verification of the words of St. Jerome, "that ambition amidst grief and tears does not cease."

So they have done their obsequies. Come, look down the vault. Here's a few flowers, which are like the pleasures of the world, my pretty one.

> "You were as flowers, now wither'd; even so
> These herblets shall, which we upon you strow."

Come on, away. The crowd withdraws; but still some few,

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anxious to bestow at least some gifts, and discharge a fond duty, scatter flowers from full hands, as if saying, "Sweets to the sweet, farewell;" and one unknown stranger, as if by stealth, throws kisses to the coffin, as a lover to his betrothed, raising afterwards a sigh audible to those near him, a sigh so piteous and profound, as it did seem to shatter all his bulk and end his being; natural though inconsequent; for it was a moment to verify the poet's impressions of the clock—

"There in that silent room below,
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;
And in the hush that followed the prayer,
Was heard the old clock on the stair,—
'For ever—never!
Never—for ever!'
Never here, for ever there,
Where all parting, pain, and care,
And death and time shall disappear,—
For ever there, but never here!
The horologe of eternity
Sayeth this incessantly,—
'For ever—never!
Never—for ever*!'"

Reader, while seeking to know perhaps more full details about the little guest whom we have accompanied up the poplar avenue to his last home, with such affection and childlike solemnity, do you ask, Homeric-like, his name,

Οὐ μὲν γάρ τις πάμπαν ἀνώνυμος ἔστ' ἀνθρώπων,
Οὐ κακὸς, οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς, ἐπὴν τὰ πρῶτα γένηται,
Ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τίθενται, ἐπεί κε τέκωσι τοκῆες;

It will be better to wait for another occasion. Later you shall hear much of his story told in fragments; and besides, mark me, who knows how our impressions might be scattered and confused with compound images, were we to stop at the beginning thus? I do fear lest we should lose distinction in our griefs, "as doth a battle, when they charge on heaps the enemy flying." Who knows? Perhaps you may already suspect it from a chance word lately dropt; perhaps other funerals, those

* Longfellow.

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of persons nearest to him, might pass before us, and distract our attention to what comes first. Every where graves open shortly after graves, flowers after flowers drop when once they begin to drop; and for once to anticipate, the fact is, that by-and-by with unrelenting approximation there is coming across our path a second train, composed of most of the same mourners. Let us at present be ignorant of what the future has in store, lest we should falter on setting out, grow giddy, feel the dilemma of another mourner, exclaiming,

τί πρῶτον, τί δ' ἔπειτα, τί δ' ὑστάτιον καταλέξω;

and give up with lamentations the task we had proposed to accomplish. It is sufficient to say that the child had been one of a happy circle, in which others grew up with him in joy and innocence, with promise of abundant fruit. There is in this bower to which he belonged already a vacancy, by the event of which you have just witnessed the sequel. That information must content you for the present.

Man is the dream of a shadow, says the ancient poet. What man really is, Socrates, with Plato, confesses that he knows not. But in a certain sense, Gerson and Bossuet seem to accept the Pindaric definition. "The life of most of us is walking in our sleep," says an old author, "and we talk our dreams." "Learn, good soul," says poor King Richard to his Queen,

> "To think our former state a happy dream;
> From which awak'd, the truth of what we are
> Shows us but this."

'Tis the same image in that divine allusion to man, "qui quasi flos egreditur et conteritur, et fugit velut umbra, et numquam in eodem statu permanet." How true is that even where the order of nature is not interrupted! The first years of our life, says St. Augustin, pass in childhood. You seek this childhood. It is no more. It has passed into youth. This youth passes into the age of a grown man. You seek this youth. It is no more. This grown man becomes old. You seek the grown man, and you find him not. This old man similarly dies, and you find him no more. There is nothing that lasts in our successive ages*. Only the latter flow with more rapidity, for—

* In Ps. lxii.

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"——— slow pass our days
In childhood, and the hours of light are long
Betwixt the morn and eve; with swifter lapse
They glide in manhood, and in age they fly;
Till days and seasons flit before the mind
As flit the snow flakes in a winter storm,
Seen rather than distinguished."

Life then is a dream, as Calderon too, following the Pythagorean, says. The particular dream, that ended as we have just witnessed, should be told in verse, with music:

"I had a dream—a strange, sweet dream—
Said a dear voice at early light;
And even yet its shadows seem
To linger in my waking sight.

"Earth, green with spring and fresh with dew,
And bright with morn before me stood;
And air just wakened softly blew,
On the young blossoms of the wood.

"Birds sang within the sprouting shade,
Bees hummed amid the whispering grass,
And children prattled as they played
Beside the violet's dimpling glass.

"Fast climbed the sun; the flowers were flown,
There played no children in the glen;
For some were dead, and some were grown
To have no mates but dames and men.

"'Twas thus I heard the dreamer say,
And bade her clear her clouded brow;
For thou and I, since childhood's day,
Have walked in such a dream till now.

"Watch we in calmness as they rise
The changes of that rapid dream,
And note its lessons, till our eyes
Shall open in the morning beam *."

This dream of childhood prattling in its bower, so common, so familiar in some respects, so similar in all cases and at all times, and yet for each so fugitive, may prove a beautiful and most instructive vision, which it would be well if possible in every

* Bryant.

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instance to arrest in its flight, by calling spirits to enact it over again and live with us for ever. Yesterday we might have said,

> "If living eyes Elysian fields could see,
> This little garden might Elysium be."

Pleasant it is to see them in their walk round it, happy in beauty, life, love, and every thing. Pleasant it is to hear them when tired with play converse together, in a shut-up place, some Sylvan's chamber whose floor is wrought with flowers, reading, as a great author says *, what the trees and leaves are meant to teach us, "hearing their lovely language, written or spoken for us, not in frightful black letters, nor in dull sentences, but in fair green and shadowy shapes of waving words and blossomed brightness of odoriferous wit, and sweet whispers of unintrusive wisdom and playful morality."

> "Free are these children, but their love refrains
> From all offence—none murmurs, none complains;
> Whether a book amused them, speech, or play,
> Their looks are lively, and their hearts are gay."

But to-day—we are awake, and have only to recount our dreams. Yes, the reality of all this, as we have seen, is gone. It never lasts with any one. Of God alone we can say, "idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient;" children grow up and change, or they are cut down like flowers, and the place no more knows them. We can sleep and dream no longer.

> "Visions of childhood! stay, oh, stay!
> Ye were so sweet and wild!
> And distant voices seemed to say,
> It cannot be! They pass away.
> Other themes demand thy lay.
> He is no more a child †."

Youth's a stuff will not endure. The delicate sweet blossoms of early life are scattered thus. Adieu, my daintiest dream! the bower of the children!

> "Where shall we seek them now? alas!
> Like the bright dewdrops on the grass,
> They passed away."

---

* Ruskin.

† Longfellow.

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"I saw the nursery windows
Wide open to the air!
But the faces of the children
They were no longer there.

"The large retriever house-dog
Was standing by the door;
He looked for his little playmates,
Who would return no more.

"They walked not under the lindens,
They played not in the hall;
But shadow and silence and sadness
Were hanging over all.

"The birds sang in the branches,
With sweet familiar tone;
But the voices of the children
Will be heard in dreams alone*!"

To return, therefore, in memory to the Children's Bower, and to fix these dreams, is the object of the following pages; that in spite of these disturbances from the sphere of the real, which are sure to arrive in every instance, we may continue to slumber, and so enjoy contents as happy as the soul's best wishes can fancy or imagine for this earth. But we should aspire to a higher object; for, if we consider rightly, we shall learn that life's best dream is a vision shadowy of truth, and that the fugitive images may be connected with a solid and permanent possession, that will bind us to life and bind us to reality. "Who shall know," says an amiable author, "what difference there is in such dreams and realities at all, save that of degree, till some higher state of existence help us to a criterion†?" And if it was delightful to Cicero at Athens to visit places where the greatest men of former times, of whom he had only read, used to dwell, to sit, and to dispute; how much more charming will it be to us to stray, though it were only in memory, through the places where those that were once known to us personally, the best and happiest, the sound of whose voices is still present with us, used to play and to rest and to converse?

Many can repeat with calm solemnity, alluding to some recent loss, the words of a poet, addressing the past,—

* Longfellow. † Leigh Hunt.

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"Thou hast my better years,
Thou hast my earlier friends—the young, the kind,
Yielded to thee with tears—
The beautiful sweet form, the exalted mind.

"My spirit yearns to bring
The lost ones back; yearns with desire intense,
And struggles hard to wring
Thy bolts apart, and pluck thy captives thence.

"In vain, thy gates deny
All passage save to those who hence depart;
Nor to the streaming eye
Thou giv'st them back, nor to the broken heart *."

But what nature denies us all in one form she permits in another. Awake from our dream, the past may be brought back to a certain life, by means of memory and its evanescent images rendered by the action of faith, vivifying a simple record of them fixed and perpetual, for the solace and instruction of those who survive, or who shall afterwards succeed. Then may follow effects, the desire of which is at least good, namely, a transmission of the thoughts and manners of early life, with all their pure and elevated inspirations, to every age and employment of men's subsequent career. And this, reader, is the main object proposed, the realization of which may impart a general interest to the following pages, by showing how it is not only possible but necessary, if men would follow the beautiful and happy path to which every one is doubly invited, to act all through life what in one sense may be called a youthful, almost a childlike part; so that at its most advanced period it may be impossible, by reference to character alone, to divine their age; since, as was said of the late Countess de Swetchine, they well seem to have traversed successively all ages, without having lost any portion of the particular charm belonging to each; being playful and simple as a child, gay and gracious, with many other privileges which we shall distinguish later, as at twenty; intelligent as at forty; and having taken from old age itself not decrepitude, but majesty alone †.

This book, then, is called "The Children's Bower; or, What

* Bryant. † Le Correspondant, t. vi. 104.

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you like," for the latter title may perhaps disarm censure when some things will be found in it different from what the former might have led you to expect. What you like, but do not be captious, since "we'll e'en to it like French falconers, and fly at any thing we see." Don't begin by saying that this is not what you like, or what any one else would like; I only mean by the title that you may call it what you like, so that at least you, though one of the greatest critics in the western world, cannot quarrel with me from the first page by blaming the title, since you have expressed permission to choose it yourself, and to qualify the whole as you may think fit. Of course many will contradict and deride at every turn.

> "For men may construe things after their fashion,
> Clean from the purpose of the things themselves;"

and readers are not always prepared to understand what is said as supposing the knowledge of what is past over in silence. Blame and sarcasm, as Cicero says, we can in no way avoid unless we write nothing; but then "to commence or continue author" is not, though Johnson says it, always "to claim praise." Gerson, for instance, had a different motive; for he consoles himself, alluding to one of his books, by repeating the saying of a certain Hismenius cited by St. Jerome, "mihi cecini et musis." Perhaps even it is not difficult to conceive such a case as that of a writer who has tried like others to bear his share in the struggles of the age with so little ardour for personal distinction, as to deem it a sign of providential care extended to himself, for which he daily feels immense gratitude,—providential, for works of no merit often float on the surface, and obtain a certain celebrity for their author, just as the pickle-seller's name supplanted that of Columbus,—that he has not been generally noticed in the crowd of his fellow-labourers; so that he has had all the pleasure of being employed without the responsibility incurred by others, and can see with delight accomplishing the result which he deemed admirable, and which will strike him as the more admirable precisely for the reason that by general consent it has been effected by workmen more skilful and more trustworthy in regard to the solidity of their constructions than himself. At all events there are other motives

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besides the desire of flying as a conqueror on the tongues of men which may actuate a writer even in these days, and perhaps in this instance motives that may be excused. A regular author is often a stern sort of character, that does not care much for any one but himself; and for whom consequently no one can feel any very great tenderness; but a man who takes up a pen may do so simply because he believes that he has little ones or tall ones unseen, in a mysterious existence elsewhere, whom he may seek to entertain, or even by transmitting their example to those still feeding on this air, to serve; he may think that the boy is still near him, taking an interest in memories of earth, not visible, "Ecqua tamen puero est amissæ cura parentis." His smile, his laugh, why not? playing in the blessed fields, would be worth all the rest; and it is for him possibly that this poor adventurer in the career of letters may be all the while occupying himself, not perhaps so vainly—

> "For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
> This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
> Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
> Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?"

At all events, as Hamlet says, "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so;" and in some one's thinking the proposed book, as far at least as relates to the idea involved in it, may be good, and perhaps too as far as its author is concerned, which of course is a small matter, wanting.

There are times, Heaven help us all! when we poor mortals would apprehend nothing but jollity, transferring the custom of Thames scullers to the fluctuating ways of life, looking not to the bourn that we are appointed to reach, but turning our backs to sorrow and our faces to the joys of earth. Humour sometime hath his hour with every man; and besides, joy is a thing so congenial with our nature, it makes the heart so vast, that, while a kind of healthful mirth wanders within us, we feel as if we must communicate it; we are like one who loves not to banquet with a joy alone. Our friends must partake too; and we feel also as if we could speak joy enough to men, to banish sadness from all love for ever; moreover, we feel on such occasions as if it was to our credit we had for once known

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what it was to be so happy, as if to open one's bosom to such joy were to study to be a man, and that it was part of manliness to show our gladness to all the world, and proclaim to every one that not merely "we have been merry once or twice ere now," but that even now while we speak to them a gayer or a merrier wight doth not breathe beneath the sky; all this of course the flat transgression of a schoolboy, who being over-joyed with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion,—such trust, as the issue proves, being a transgression. These are the short moments when, without exactly knowing why, we are taken with light things infinitely, and are inclined to see all objects on this earth as if invested with perfection, to apprehend nothing but pleasure, and to think whatever is to be beautiful. In this state of mind it is easy to resemble Euryalus, *εἰπὼν οὐ κατὰ κόσμον*—

> "And in this world certein no wight ther is
> That he ne doth or seyth som time amis."

But it seldom happens that there does not come then a collision that makes us turn round, that there is not given as it were a rub to tarnish and dim all this brightness. Then after an interval every thing begins afresh to shine and glitter and conceal its imperfections; we are going to be happy and thoughtless again; but scarcely have we hailed with timid jubilation the return of our former train of thinking, when there comes another shock to stop us, another rub to make things look dark; and

> "O God, what doth not one short hour snatch up
> Of all man's gloss!"

Students in history at least, however grave, ought not perhaps to wonder much if one piece of valiant dust or clod of wayward marl should not be more constant than the Christian Church itself collectively. Now if you desire to see the consequences of a smooth peaceful gliding down the stream of time in the case of the latter, they will tell you that you have only to read what St. Cyprian and the poet Commodien have recorded of the whole Christian society in their days. But God sends persecutions from time to time to the whole body of the faithful, and for the same reason perhaps calamities and afflictions to each

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poor mortal,—for man is a giddy thing; and so both are restored, or put in the way of being restored, to that state from which the mobility of the human heart and the temptation of a prosperous life may have caused them to diverge.—"Afflictio dat intellectum." Even where nothing of evil is apparent there may be a thousand secret reasons for such ordeals; and it is as manly to endure them as to feel and express joy. It has been well said that "a man has no very firm foundation who has not had two or three times his structure on the sand washed away,—that great disappointments are among our best educators, that they let in beams of light, and, however painful the process, that it is only by having our illusions dissipated by them, we are admitted to the true reality of things*." These variations at intervals, therefore, constituting what the sacred Scripture calls the "tempus ridendi" and the "tempus flendi," continue to the end of our lives on earth. World, world, world! But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee, life would not yield to age.

"——————————Oh!
Could the long fever of the heart be cool'd
By a sweet breath from nature; or the gloom
Of a bereaved affection pass away
With looking on the lively tint of flowers,
How lightly were the spirit reconciled
To make this beautiful bright world its home†!"

But no; however cheerful He wishes him to be, "God did not expel man," says Gerson, "from a garden of pleasure in order immediately and expressly to lay out a new one for him here." What is around us still is very beautiful; "snatches of pleasure between the acts of our distressful drama" may and should be taken. But He sometimes compels those invited to the marriage to enter,—lacerating the tunic of one, breaking the legs of another, putting out the eyes of this one, depriving that one of his treasure, and strewing thorns on the ways around lest any should walk in them too carelessly and to their own destruction. So men pass alternately from peace to disquietude, from having a heart as light as a feather to sorrow that would weigh down a

* Hood's Wordsworth. † Willis.

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world, from tribulation and tears to final happiness and bliss for ever*.

Without supposing positive evil in any of his views, it follows then that we must expect to find different books to suit man in these successive changes which affect them; for though all were right in their respective lights, though an author may have thought in his simplicity that he had written so that Minerva herself would say, *ταῦτα κατὰ μοῖραν κατέλεξας*, still neither he nor any one else will always like the same thing, be it what it will. Only let circumstances change as we have been supposing, and what before pleased will seem thenceforth for a time at least equivocal, perhaps not written *κατὰ μοῖραν*, possibly even a thing to be disliked. Nothing is good, as Portia says, without respect; and things must be by reason seasoned to their right praise and true perfection. Does any thing appear similar to another man as to you, asks Socrates, or does it appear the same even to you always as if you were identical with yourself? The fact is, there is nothing of intellectual art, addressed to mind, that can stand by itself without some external aid or other to make it what it is intended to be. Place, for instance, the best landscape in a bad light, and if not seen previously elsewhere, it will convey no idea of what the artist intended to the mind; even at the best the spectator must suppose what is not given in it, namely, the sun's illumination. So it is in literary compositions. Place the views of life enjoyed by a poet and a lover before a man intent on making money, or those taken by a father who has lost his sons before the gay and prosperous, and both views will seem false, and prove distasteful; for they cannot have effect, since their hints are not watched nor their suggestions carried out by the understanding of the reader. Seen from such different points of view, the object does not appear the same. As the picture must be seen in the light that favours it, while allowance is made for the impossibilities, so must the book be read to the mind that has capacity to take it in, and a willingness to enter into its views; and that capacity and willingness almost entirely depend on the circumstances at the time of the reader or listener. A man who

* De Consolatione Theologiæ, P. iv. lib. iii.

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is merry will relish one kind of book, and a man who has learned "to see all the earth by the sunlight of death-beds" will desire another. There must be trains of thought to suit boys, youths, lovers, the studious, the ambitious, and those who experience that state of weariness and disappointment when the mind turns to children or to those resembling them, and finds in them all that on earth it loves or can admire. It is you therefore, reader, that must make these poor shadows what they ought to be. If they are to please, it must be by your imagination and not mine.

But without referring to what readers may require, there is another reason why we must expect to find the tone of books very different, one from another; for those who write them will almost necessarily make their subject and their style appropriate to the ideal scenery within them, arising out of their own circumstances. Sometimes a book appears that has been written when its author was in a holiday humour, when a soft breeze and a bright garden, with some friendly chit-chat, will be thought to afford more pabulum to the brain "than all the frusts, and crusts, and rusts of antiquity" which the learned can cook up for it. In that book there will be no lack of humble foolery; it will be a gallimaufry of gambols. It will be—

> "A thing slipp'd idly from him.
> Our poesy is as a gum which oozes
> From whence 'tis nourished; the fire i' the flint
> Shows not till it be struck."

For this it will not be the fault of a few grave critics judging it as if addressed to masters in Israel, and perhaps even of some secret unprovoked enemies knowing him after all better than his friends, if he has not soon "derision medicinable." Yes, just so, medicinal; since he may like what tickles his vanity as well as any one, and since there can be no view so narrow as not to have some truth in it, from whatever signs men will wrest an alphabet; and though perhaps he can see no reason why he should drink white hellebore, blot all out, or unwind the web that he had wrought in cheerful happy hours, though he cannot be sorry—even after having read the eloquent denunciation by a contemporary against our age—for having

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written as one who was not angry with men or with the times, though he cannot condemn an attempt to disengage moral elevation, the power of goodness and of humility hidden in the lowest condition, and even sometimes in degradation, as flame in the grossest mines,—to inspire interest in the most lowly details, to exemplify the line of Corneille—

"Dieu fait part au pécheur de sa grâce infinie,"

to expose the horror of fanaticism, the injustice of all exaggerations, and upon the whole to take a cheerful and equitable view of the common things of life around us,—though what is contrary to all this he would leave for those to say who think they can assert it with safety respecting the settlement of their own accounts with Heaven; still when prostrated by irresistible calamity coming upon him in an unexpected form—the death of those he loved,—such a person, though he need not unpack his heart with words and fall a groaning, feels while bending under the weight of such memories that he cannot any longer be the mere light companion that he once wished to be, or bear that burden with elastic steps. Without any act of his own the scenery of his mind has been shifted; and then addressing that genius of delight which had before enchanted him, he says with the poet—

"O lady! turn those eyes away:
For when their beams upon me play,
The whole wide world grows blank and grey!
Disturb not thou a lonely fate,
A milder beauty is my mate:
And I to her am dedicate.
Pass onward beautiful as morn!
Pass on and shine on hearts forlorn.
Pass on from me—but not in scorn *."

Yet, on the other hand, however stunned, disheartened, struck to the quick, such a person has something more to do than to feel. He will still move and work mechanically, as muscles after life has left them. He cannot remain long at rest, crossing his hands before him, and wholly abandoning the pursuits which

* Aubrey de Vere.

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had hitherto deluded him with the idea of his being not wholly a dead weight upon the earth. The often repeated saying, "It was so easy for the author not to have written it," does not apply in every instance. It is not so easy always not to write, especially when the imagination and the heart have been struck, to say nothing of something else having been deeply and powerfully moved.

> "Still hath his night of life some memory,
> His wasting lamps some fading glimmer left."

Therefore in spite of all discouragement, finding no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time, without the prospect of any pleasure resulting to himself, a thing henceforth he thinks denied to him in every form unless in short sunny moments of forgetfulness,—he returns to his former habits and proposes to offer some sketch that, while in harmony with his own condition, may possibly, however little his pretensions, prove not wholly uninstructive or unsuggestive to others.

> "——————————— It is,
> As you must needs have deeply felt it is,
> In darkness and in tempest that we seek
> The majesty of Him who rules the world.
> Benevolence, that has not heart to use
> The wholesome ministry of pain and evil,
> Becomes at last weak and contemptible."

"No man is thoroughly awaked," says Sir Thomas Overbury, "but by affliction." "No man," says Hood, "has sufficiently graduated to become a teacher until he has suffered." Triptolemus, who first taught men to sow the earth and reap its fruits, in the allegory of Leigh Hunt, besought the goddess Demeter to become his tutor and guide, and she conducted him through a course of trials so severe that those who dared to be spectators of them fainted and died beneath the spectacle. "Gradual sorrow," said she, "shall give birth to gradual joy." She stretched him on a fiery rack in the midst of her temple; but by the fire his spirit was so expanded, his eyes so opened, that visions of surpassing wonder appeared before him. The first pains conducted him to Deformity, the analysis of things;

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but as the blaze of the fire deepened beneath him, he passed on to the wholeness and perfectness of things. Suffering became sublimed to Endurance. Endurance matured itself to immortal strength. And thus was he fitted to go forth from the temple sowing joy wherever he went. Thus does suffering prepare for man what all should covet—

> "A soul by force of sorrows high,
> Uplifted to the parent sky
> Of undisturbed humanity."

And in truth, without having heard Gerson's six masters speaking of tribulation, and of the secrets that it can teach, whoever returns from the disagreeable school of sorrow may be supposed, however slightingly others may be disposed to think of him generally, to possess some knowledge and even criterion of taste that others want; for, not to speak of what one can at least imagine, coming to know ineffable secrets, of having one's misery at least for moments divinely sustained, of feeling a wish to redeem lost time, of being made capable perhaps of receiving later for good a new stamp, and of the other incomparable advantages that these six masters point out as its result*, it is probable that a man who can say of himself in Homeric language, I have suffered much,—*μάλα δ' εἰμὶ πολύστονος*,—will have stumbled upon some useful discoveries and acquisitions. He will have found out, for instance, that things may serve long, but not serve for ever; that the things of the world are perishable, and that when one is a Christian one should think of something better. He will have begun to love some things that he doated on perhaps a moment before, as an old man loves money, with no stomach. He will have learned, if not to concentrate his regards exclusively on what the French call severe studies, at least to salute them with more respect, and even to cultivate or renew with more cordiality a personal intimacy with them. He will be enabled to appreciate better that higher literature which is both learned and inspired, which employs words only to speak to the soul, and which employs the art of writing under

* Sex magistri de tribulatione loquentes.

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the purest and gravest forms *. From having learned to say of himself and of those nearest to him, "we have seen the best of our time," he will be more able to estimate the difference between what is ephemeral and what will last for ever. He will feel sure of the vanity of the one and certain as to the importance of the other: and this state of mind is an acquirement not to be slighted. We are many of us like fish enclosed in a net; we jump and fling ourselves about to escape from certain restraints and regain the sea of illusions and of fancied freedom. But calamity, though a sharp infliction, enables us to open our eyes to behold the danger of that sea, and makes us prefer being confined within the net and captured by God. Then we learn to say with St. Augustin, "Since it has pleased his goodness to fish for us with the net of faith, let us rejoice that being in these malignant waters we should be at least within a net. The sea is horrible by its tempests, but the net in which we are enclosed will be drawn to shore. The shore is the end of this life. We shall thus come to the end of misery †." A man therefore, whatever he may be, can justly claim some attention when he has been brought to possess this kind of knowledge.

Because he has been struck low, made tame by fortune's blows, it is no reason indeed why others should feel disheartened: he has no wish to darken the mirth of others' feasts, and indeed no right to impose his sorrows upon them—

> "Must they be thus afflicted with his wreaks,
> His fits, his frenzy, and his bitterness?"

They may reasonably turn from him, and leave all faint puling to those whose minds are overwhelmed; but to touch lightly from time to time the chord that awakens some memory of sorrows may please them even in their serene hours. How many tender plaintive passages, even full of longing and of sadness, do they feel enchanted with in the compositions of Rossini and Mozart, as in Verdi's "Come, music, with thy softest tone!" One may conclude that literature to please them must in that respect resemble this other language of the soul. Poor creatures! they too have their griefs, their fears of hostile strokes,

* Villemain, Rapports académiques. † In Ps. lxiv.

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their losses and their pangs of love, with other incident throes that nature's fragile vessel doth sustain in life's uncertain voyage; and who knows but by relating tales of others' sorrows, however common, one may relieve them from the hardly endurable burden of suppressed grief? for there are many whose personal afflictions seem to dry up the fountain of tears for whatever may affect themselves; and it will be like the specific of a skilful physician to make them cry for the misfortunes of others who would weep not for their own. It was a mistake to say that mankind at large prefer comedy to tragedy. It is the latter, "the most pleasing," as Plato says, "to the vulgar, which is the most soul-alluring of all kinds of poetry*." Even men thought constant to lightness are sometimes met on unfrequented ground. They were for mirth; but finding it grew to a noted imperfection in them, for any thing too much is vicious, they come to these disconsolate walks, of purpose, only to dull and take away the edge of it. Let men be ever so happy they may feel pleasure in being rendered pensive though only by reading some "tedious brief scene, very tragical mirth;" for in one sense nature will thus struggle, and in part even so it shall be found here. His story will alternately prove cheerful and tragical; for sorrow is never so intense as where it meets with aptitude for pleasure. Gray's pleasantry, we are told, came to him through his melancholy, assisted by the general delicacy of his perceptions, and his willingness to be pleased.

> "The violence of either grief or joy
> Their own enactures with themselves destroy."

Hamlet after hearing the Ghost can put an antic disposition on, and lead others to think him merry. He can still feel an interest in the actors in whom he once was wont to take delight. "The sources of tears and smiles lie close to, ay, and help to refine one another." And this it was perhaps which made Socrates at the end of the banquet remark, "that it was the province of the same person to know how to write comedy and tragedy." Let such a writer as we are supposing only remember what a modern author says, that "a man who can be nothing but

* Minos.

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serious, or nothing but merry, is but half a man*." Let him only, to use the language of a painter, understand light and shadow; let him only have the grace not to belie the school he comes from, and not seek to disguise the facts relating to himself by trying to impart an unnatural tone to the whole of his composition. For parts of it at least he must have a suit of sables—

> "Since sorrow that is couch'd in seeming gladness
> Is like that mirth fate turns to sudden sadness."

"A book," as an old author says, "is like music; if in tune with itself 'tis no matter how high or how low you take it." In this instance you must be prepared for its author saying at times that he comes no more to make you laugh, but that such scenes as draw the eye to flow he must have freedom to disclose—

> "Oh! grief hath chang'd him since you saw him last,
> And careful hours, with Time's deformed hand,
> Have written strange defeatures in his face."

The passion that must be spoken of, like the death of a dear friend, will go near to make a man look sad, though he be a stranger to it. Think, for example, he will say perhaps, in the beginning of such a work as that of which we have just sketched the plan,—think "ye see the very children of our story as they were living,—think ye see them happy, and followed with the general throng and suite of friends,—then, in a moment, see how soon this vision changes—

> 'Like snow that falls upon a river,
> A moment white, then gone for ever.'"

See this sudden change—

> "And if you can be only merry then, I'll say
> A man may weep upon his wedding day."

However, as some one says with our poet, "No more of this, go to, no more, lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow than to have,"—to whom he may crave permission to reply with Helena—

> "I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too;

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* Leigh Hunt, "A Book for a Corner."

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Nature's above art in that respect,
Dry sorrow drinks our blood.
The grief is fine, full, perfect that I taste,"—

however such a person may seek to qualify or express it.

But here an objection may be raised to the design and arrangement of all such works, which it will be well to consider, as no doubt a vague anticipation of it is almost sufficient to reduce one to the state of mind of the Duc de Saint-Simon when he consented to allow some lines of his making to be published during his life only anonymously, and "à la condition qu'on lui en épargnerait le ridicule dans le monde." Examples known only to a small circle, and events which pass in private life, ought not to be displayed before the public, say the critics of literature; but though, for other reasons, it is often best for each of us to endure what may befall him, "plenus constantis silentii," one may claim pardon for expressing a wish to know on what principle this assertion rests. Complaints and lamentings are of course always foolish, but is not personal experience of any kind a good school for an author to have previously studied in? Will not his book be more likely to prove for it what an old author terms "heart-work?" "Is it not in the truth of sentiments," as Villemain says, "that what the French call inspiration ought to be looked for*?" or as Vauvenarges maintains, "Is it not from the heart that great thoughts come?" Are not the simplest facts of common life, which in one sense ought not to be called private, since they are more or less the same in all families, very often more impressive and more instructive, if you think well on them, and look straight at them, than all the fine writing that is approved of as the sole standard of excellence by those learned persons who sometimes keep for awhile the doors of the temple of literary fame, whose worship in it is often, after all, but a commercial speculation, and from whose mockery, if they think it conducive to their interest, or if it feed their craving of the moment, not even "those in the clay are safe?" "I have often thought," says Johnson, "that there has rarely passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful. For all is common to human kind. It is objected to relations

* Choix d'Etudes sur la Littérature contemporaire.

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of particular lives, that the public cannot take interest in them; that there is nothing striking or wonderful in them; but this notion arises from false measures of excellence and dignity, and it must be eradicated by considering, that in the esteem of uncorrupted reason, what is of most use is of most value. . . . There are many invisible circumstances which, whether we read as inquirers after natural or moral knowledge, whether we intend to enlarge our science or increase our virtue, are more important than public occurrences. Yet these are passed over. The incidents which give excellence to biography are of a volatile and evanescent kind, such as soon escape the memory, and are rarely transmitted by tradition, though without mention of these all accounts of particular persons are barren." As Saint-Simon says, "Such things have not the dryness, or authority, or formality which repel and so often render useless the counsels or opinions of those who take upon themselves to offer both." The writer is praised on high authority who, like the father of a family, "profert de thesauro suo nova et vetera *." What then forbids men to produce these new instances, freshly observed, copied on the spot, without a touch added afterwards, in the private histories of their contemporaries however obscure? "He has formed the heart of each of us," says the Psalmist †; on which words commenting, St. Augustin says, "He has formed them in a particular manner for each of us, giving to each something proper to himself, without causing all these hearts to break unity; and each man has an office of his own to discharge ‡." The sorrows of no two men are exactly similar. Each has something to tell of himself that is singular and new, perhaps as strange as it is tragical. If any one ask the cause which compelled the writers of such books to engage in literary composition, there is nothing probably which they can more easily answer; for it was a reunion of moral causes, of accidents, of involuntary impressions; it was a sense of the peculiarity of their afflictions, strengthening from strange to stranger. Some will cry out against them for mentioning such things at all. "We in England," says Johnson, "do not think it reasonable to fill the world with volumes containing

* Matt. xiii. † xxxii. ‡ In Ps.

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only narratives of our private affairs, complaints of absence, or of losses, expressions of fondness, or of lamentation." True, it is not very difficult to aggravate trifling misfortunes, and to magnify familiar incidents, as if forsooth a man should fill a book with them and think

> "That lords and ladies of their lives
> Can read it for restoratives."

"Yet if men may be permitted," as the sage Doctor says, "sometimes to decorate insignificance with a few sallies of innocent gaiety or effusions of honest tenderness," surely they may be allowed to tell of sorrows which involve deepest thoughts, which can awaken us to a sense of the beauty of those affections of which men seem bent on not fully recognizing the dignity till they attain to the future life. Of course there are some ears to which such things, however young, had best be left unrecounted. "I know," says Pliny, "these kind of misfortunes would be estimated by other persons only as common losses, and from such sensations they would conceive themselves great and wise men. I shall not determine either their greatness or their wisdom; but I am certain they have no humanity—'homines non sunt.' For it is the part of a man to be affected with grief, to feel sorrow, at the same time that he is to resist it and to admit of comfort *." Picus of Mirandula ascribes his undertaking the vast and admirable work which he wrote against the ancient Gentile philosophy to his own personal calamities, which, after describing in detail, he compares to the sponge dashed by the hand of Apelles upon the mouth of the horse he was painting, of which he had before vainly attempted to represent the foam; and he only remarks this difference between them, that his sponge was not thrown with indignation. "Quippe," he adds, "quæ Deus perpeti me voluit, ejus ipsius gratia conatus sum æquo animo et patienter ferre †." Still I am aware, that in these times, when, as La Bruyère said, "on est froid sur les conceptions d'autrui," no one who brings forward

* Plin. by Lord Orrery.

† Exam. var. doct. gentium et verit. christ. disciplinæ, lib. iii. præem.

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any fragments from private life has a right to expect to see his hearer curious about them as such.

"—— miroque incensum pectus amore
Compellare virum et casus cognoscere tantos."

But without having been to Troy, and however great may be one's incapacity to do it justice, "the life of every one of us," as Hood remarks, "is a romance;" and as Carlyle says, "there is the fifth act of a tragedy in every death-bed." "The life of every one of us is full of incident. Go to the lowest roof in the land, take the most unimaginative history, the most quiet and retired existence of all, and you shall find that there is not one so humble as to be the unforgotten of tears and hopes. . . . There is another world of action than that which is revealed in the pages of Froissart and Monstrelet. When we turn the eye inward what a world of motive and design is there!—what resolves, what vows, what dreams, what hopes, what disappointments! And in this, and these all our race call us brother! sister! These consecrate all habitations; in every one has been heard the still sad music of humanity. Why do we seek old feudal structures to shudder at the tale of fear?—every room is haunted—songs have arisen, tears have fallen by every fireside; the maiden hath been snatched away; the youth hath fallen, the heart hath throbbed with agony. What have tapestried chambers and high marble rooms to show more than this? Yet we talk of 'common things,' as if the best exertions were not the most common; and we talk of common life, as if that were not the richest poetry which comes nearest to the universal sympathy, the heart, the home, the thought of every one of us*!"

"Of old things, all are over old,
Of good things, none are good enough.
We'll show that we can help to frame
A world of other stuff."

It is then the sorrow of common life, though in its form or circumstances peculiar to themselves, that moves authors of this kind to communicate what they think they have learned from it; and if they will only put down simply, and without changing

* Hood.

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any thing through regard to notions about dignity of style, what has been seen by their own eyes and heard with their own ears, and things that come from the heart direct, not by the medium of the fancy, there will be always some persons, though having nothing to do with literature, to thank them for it. That sorrow presses on the writers of such pages; that dream of life to which we just alluded is still passing before them; even when they wake it is without them as within them, not imagined, but felt. Their sons taken from before their eyes live in their minds and memories. One time they still saunter with them on the old path, play with them on the same hill, converse with them in their own way, just as when they lived, excepting that there is experienced a certain sickness of heart the while: at another they begin every thing as the Timæus opens with saying to themselves, "One, two, three! where are those who yesterday made up the six?" You think they ought not to divulge a private sorrow. They deny that it is private; they say, "if all the world could have seen it, the woe had been universal." You think they will be ashamed to speak before strangers in praise of those whom they have lost, but they won't be ashamed. "Grief," as De Quincey says of himself, "has cured all sensibility to shame in regard to every thing which is connected with what they loved. They have received a new heart. Fifty thousand sneering faces will not trouble them now in any office of tenderness to their boys' memory. Mockery! it will be lost upon them. Laughter! they value it not*." You would have histories; but they will reply to you in the words of a poet, saying,

"Little avails it now to know
Of ages past so long ago,
And how they rolled;
Our theme shall be of yesterday,
Which to oblivion sweeps away
Like days of old†."

But recurring to the plan of the present book, it will be asked perhaps of what possible use it can be to write about children, since the public cannot be expected to care for details with which every one is familiar? You want a ready answer? Shall

* Autob. i. † Longfellow.

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I content you if I say that there are two classes of men than whom no contraries hold more antipathy;—that whatever most offends a pedant, some people even with pens in their hands like best, and that what he has a contempt for is to them, partly on that very account, manna? It would be the truth—

> "Nature, that loves not to be questioned
> Why she did this or that, but has her ends,
> And knows she does well, never gave the world
> Two things so opposite, so contrary,
> As man and man."

But it is better to give a simpler reply: for truth here would sound like the coin of such bearded gentlemen proficients, pedantic insolence. And it is more becoming to try to say sincerely with Gerson, "absit omnis amaritudo reprehensionis." Let us imitate the simplicity of young people, being about to speak of young people.

"It is the mediocrity of wisdom," says an old author, "that troubleth all the world; it is this that leads all the world wrong, for it is this that constitutes the wisdom of the world." Now perhaps more than ever is this direction of minds visible; for as a foreign writer justly remarks, "while of late great attention has been paid to the first and second classes of instruction, the superior stage is left every where deplorably imperfect*." Pedantry and shallowness are now in consequence the characteristics of those whose vocation ought to assimilate them to the childlike and youthful spirit, to find which we must now perhaps consort with the ignorant, or at least with those the farthest removed from literary fame. Many will remember the saying of a great contemporary, that "our first and last opinions often coincide, that it is the middle stage which is farthest from the truth; and that childhood often holds a truth with its feeble fingers which the grasp of manhood cannot retain, which it is the pride of utmost age to recover†." "The one enemy we have in this universe," says another eloquent voice of our day, "is stupidity, darkness of mind, of which darkness there are many sources, every sin being a source, and probably self-conceit the chief source; the pedant darkness which asserts and believes itself to be light

* C. Le Normant. † Ruskin, Modern Painters.

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being the most formidable to mankind. For empires or for individuals there is but one class of men to tremble at, and that is the stupid class, the class that cannot see or who will not see," which constitutes assuredly the class that is most opposed to the thoughts and intentions of the young. Without however taking advantage of such passages, it must be clear, let the gentry with long beards look as grave as they will, that for all who would study in the school of that true and noble philosophy which flows from the Christian religion, children, whom Gerson designates as "the most beautiful and flourishing portion of the Church *," are among the best teachers, and among those also who yield the best examples of that philosophy in action. "Childhood and youth," says an old Christian writer †, "have many eminent qualities, even though no moderator should be at their elbow,—'est magna in ipsa indole vis ad recte vivendum.' And as in trees there is an early flower than which nothing can be more beautiful and delightful, so is there a certain charm in the first age of man, which cannot be observed without admiration; that careless elegance of features, that sweetness of voice, that air of candour,—do you think this is to be blamed? Does that ingenuous modesty displease you? that readiness to blush, to smile, to weep; that flowing hair, those mild eyes, that soft smooth flesh? are these indications of some latent evil in their time of life? or do you not appreciate that greater sincerity of mind, that willingness to yield and to consent, that absence of all captious words, that will void of all malice, that breast disturbed by no evil commotion? You complain that this young age loves trifles and trifling. Well, something must be conceded to its wants in this respect." This is much assuredly coming from so grave a writer, and yet we might easily multiply such extracts. "Who does not know," says Gerson, furnishing another instance, "that as in plants and vines, so the first fruits of the youthful age of man are the most gracious and acceptable?" though I will not go the length of that subversive line and say, "Angelicus juvenis senibus sathanizat in annis." But the truth is, that we are not left to the mercy of grave and

* Doctrina pro Pueris Eccles. Parisiensis.

† Bonifacius, Institutio Christiani Pueri.

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severe people and to any speculations on this subject. The question is set at rest, whatever your men of austerity may think, by the words we hear read in churches; as in the Gospel for the Festival of St. Michael, where it is said, "At this time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus calling a little boy, placed him in the midst of them, and said, Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever therefore will humble himself like this little boy, he will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in my name, receives me; but whoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it would be well for him that a millstone should be hung round his neck and that he should be cast into the depths of the sea*." "Now," says Cardinal Palæotus, after citing these words for his text when about to address not old women or nursery-maids or maudlin sentimentalists, but the first nobles of the city of Bologna, "this involves one of the most important subjects possible, and we cannot consider it with too much attention. If any of us in such an assembly as the present were to take a little common boy by the hand and present him to it, and embrace him, it would be thought that he was about to relate some fable, or to utter something ludicrous, unworthy of the dignity of such a presence. But this very act of Christ only proves how He estimated the difficulty and gravity of the theme, which was not by mere words alone to be submitted to the minds of men, but to be impressed upon them by a lively image that it might sink deeper into them, on the principle

> 'Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
> Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.'

So to signify better the momentous importance of what He was teaching, which words alone would not be adequate to express, He leads before his disciples this little common boy, and embraces him, saying to those who would drive him away, 'Sinite pueros venire ad me,' for of such is the kingdom of heaven†."

So from the Bower the model for individuals, and conse-

* Matt. xviii. 1.

† De Bonon. Eccl. Admin. p. vii. 567.

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quently though it falls not within our scope to consider it, even for states and governments, is found; and it is combined too, we may observe, with this great advantage which was wanting to that so elaborately and vainly worked out and proposed by Plato; for it implies nothing but what is possible, nothing but what has been often witnessed in many countries, and what could, in all countries and in any age of the world, be restored and established, if men would only learn to appreciate beauty of mind as they do that of body, and estimate the former with as much fairness as they judge of the latter, thinking, like a lover, that every difference of feature and complexion has its charms, if it be in the bloom and season of youth. As many as there are men and states corresponding to them, so many are there minds, views, and manners. Plato proposes five sorts, namely, the regal, the timocratic, the oligarchal, the democratic, and the tyrannic. What forbids us to add a sixth, the childlike? Plato indeed even speaks of a family the most youthlike, meaning the most virtuous *. There is the child-man with regard to the body politic, just as there is the tyrant-man and the rest of them. Departing from the model of the former, we find from experience that the results are opposed to innocence, simplicity, love, charity, faith, piety, truth, pure courage, philosophy, wisdom, the endurance of life's trials in individuals; while, if we had space for such an extension of plan, we might show that they are at the same time totally opposed to national virtue and to state happiness. We shall find proof in the sequel, that the child-man, and consequently, as Plato would argue, that the child-state, would be the best and happiest, that both would surpass all others in decorum of life and in high principles, in beauty and in virtue.

But unless we know what children and young people really are, unless we study as it were their physiology, and ascertain in what peculiarities their character consists, we cannot expect to copy them accurately, or to become morally like them. It is therefore highly judicious to investigate the subject, and seek to form a correct idea of the intellectual and moral qualities which distinguish those who are to be our models.

* Alcibiades.

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We shall soon discover that in truth it is in the spiritual as in the corporeal world. We cannot get on well in any direction without aid from such little people. They were wanted in Paradise before the fall. Milton represents our first parents anticipating the need of younger hands to till their garden of pleasure:

> "The paths and bow'rs doubt not but our joint hands
> Will keep from wilderness, with ease as wide
> As we need walk, till younger hands ere long
> Assist us ——."

This is what he supposes said in the garden of Eden; and, grave stranger, depend upon it, since the transgression, and in this actual world of ours, we all need younger minds to clear the moral and spiritual thicket and keep it wholesome.

Their voices are like the vowels of the alphabet, without which other letters are mute. It would be well if the pride of maturity, which shrinks from what is childlike, could be so far allayed as to enable men to recognize, in regard to the difference between youth and manhood, the principle laid down by a great author, of "union, not by equality, but by giving and receiving, and to respond with one of the laws of God, which appoints that the most lovely and perfect unity shall be obtained by the taking of one nature into another." "Manhood would not then recoil from the idea of adorning the nature of a generous soul," as Plato says, "by a certain juvenile form, of receiving even the spirit of childhood and of adopting its manners with what imitation it could borrow from youth of such a season."

The boyhood of great men has been proposed for an example to youth, as showing merely that study, diligence, and steady industry are essential for qualifying men to exercise their talents with credit and advantage; but the boyhood of common men might be held up to mature manhood and age, to be studied with higher views and with more excellent results, as preventing them from ever having what Plato calls "diseased souls*," and as conveying the most important instruction on all points relating to the formation of the character as regards both their honour in the present life and their happiness in the next. As it is, how diffi-

* Protagoras.

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cult would it be to find any trace among even Christian historians of the idea that manhood and age can be benefited by partaking in some respects of the juvenile character! The utmost we can expect, is to light upon some ambiguous eulogy like that expressed by the Duc de Saint-Simon when, speaking of the Duc and Duchesse de Foix passing their life in amusement, he relates that they were generally beloved, and that it was a common saying, that though arrived at an advanced age, they had both stopped at eighteen and were never older *. Yet with what excellent effect might he not have introduced into his admirable delineations of character, some notice of the high and noble, as well as of the amiable qualities of youth having been copied as it were, and carried out, as in the instance of Madam de Swetchine in years of maturity!

I am aware that many details which are to be presented later, will seem puerile; such, in fact, as with a flourish of the pen can be made ridiculous, and to cover with ridicule him who cherishes them; but those persons who are accustomed to look below the surface of things will find them not so contemptible. They are traits of human nature in youthful age, and, as such, perhaps they are entitled to as much notice as is generally bestowed on matters of more pretension, such as the intrigues or etiquette of courts, the policy of selfish, and, we might add, benighted governments, as well as the private contests of vanity and ambition.

"I am convinced," says Father Boniface, "that an admirable history might be composed by him who should visit the houses of private persons, and investigate the lives of their children. Of temperance not vulgar, of discretion more than senile, of fortitude exemplary, of memorable justice, of singular patience, of admirable constancy, of angelic purity, of incomparable charity, of wise moderation, of perfect religion, and, in a word, of all virtues, examples abound in their company uncalled for †." To collect such instances, take what view of them we may, would not be time misspent. "In our literature," says Villemain, "so extensive and so varied, among so many admirable works conducive to our intelligence, how rare are books that treat of early life, and that perfectly correspond to it! Men

* T. xi. 47. † Bonifacius, Institutio Christiani Pueri, &c.

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write to court opinion, passion, and truth, in its most brilliant manifestations. They have been less successful in writing for that humble, modest truth, which is all of application to common things *." But, as has been already suggested, more than this may be advanced to show the importance that would be attached to such a history; since with regard to many points affecting the character, not alone of individuals, but of whole nations, there is a contrast between the mind and manners of the young and those of later life, so deep and unfathomable, that we have no alternative but to draw Glaucon's inference and say, "if the young are right, the rest of the world is wrong," which is a consideration, of course, that invites us to a deliberation of a far graver kind than any concerned with mere questions of literature or science; since, as Plato even says, "most momentous is the inquiry about a good life and a bad one †."

Nor is it instruction only we derive from our bower. What pleasure exceeds that which we obtain while acquiring it, when we sit with children, and gaze on them, and listen to them, loving

> "To revel in the bright young eyes,
> Whose lustre sparkles through
> The sable fringe of southern skies,
> Or gleams in Saxon blue ‡?"

How many will understand the feelings of Pepys when he writes in his Diary, "dined with the children, and were merry," and elsewhere, "I found that my lady do keep the children at home, and lets them not come any more hither at present, which a little troubles me to lose their company!" Moreover, though it is perhaps digressing already to remark it, how could many austere people learn to entertain just and reasonable, and consequently Christian notions of the world as it exists, if they did not observe the character of children, and the immense part which they play in its economy? For while zealots declaim against the world as if already ripe for being destroyed, the student in this school remarks the fact, that there are in it more children and youths, who constitute, as Gerson says, no vile

* Rapports académiques, 1849.

† De Repub. ix.

‡ Holmes.

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portion of the Church, since "talium est regnum cœlorum," than adults. Hence a poet cries,

> "Glory to God, who so the world hath framed,
> That in all places children more abound
> Than they by whom humanity is shamed.
> Children outnumber men; and millions die
> (Who knows not this?) in blameless infancy,
> Sowing with innocence our sin-stained ground*."

Therefore, consorting with children causes us to love the world in a right way, and in a sense too that admits of a very wide and happy application, enabling us to love it with all its varied and ever-changing spectacle of seasons and hours, of circumstances and relations, including even human artistic works, all fraught with such rapture for the young, in whose innocent delights so many of the highest genius always sympathize. Whether therefore you consider the position in which children stand with regard to the attainment of happiness in this life and in the next, and consequently the importance of studying these qualities, the imitation of which will enable us to realize for ourselves both, or their numbers existing every where in the present world, and in consequence the modifications which a knowledge of them requires in our estimation of the general scene actually around us, I do not see that we have any reason to doubt the practical importance of the subject that we propose to consider.

One thing seems very certain, both from history and from daily observation, which is this, that the wiser and better, or the more weary of pretensions, men become, the more they show themselves inclined to graduate at this quiet little school of youth. Oh! when the spirit, as Elia says, is sore fretted, even tired to sickness of the janglings and nonsense—noises of the world, what a balm and a solace it is to go and seat yourself, for a half hour, upon some undisputed corner of a bench among the gentle children! Besides, common as they are, where can you even have more noble, more princely company? Courtiers themselves feel that 'child' is a higher title than any word current in their halls. "It was pretty to observe," says Pepys,

* Aubrey de Vere.

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"how when my Lord sent down to St. James's to see why the Duke of York came not, and Mr. Povy, who went, returned, my Lord Chancellor did ask, not how the Princes or the Dukes do, as other people do, but 'How do the children?' which methought was mighty great, and like a great man." The truth is, that men of deep observation, exquisite sensibility, and highly cultivated minds, which all tend to make them desire to be on a level with what is common in humanity, contract after long intercourse with the world, not through humility, but through the clearness of intellectual vision, a distaste for most other kinds of company but that of the young, or, if you will, the foolish, and of those who retain a young heart. They grow weary of your superior men, of your clever men, of talented men, of your men of great information, who so often seem to deserve the old epithet of δεινοί, of philosophic men, of practical men, of contemplative men, of benevolent men, ay, and of some grave and reverent men too. They find in children, as in those who become like them from each of these classes, being led to this conformity by religion or by genius, a new, fresh world, that revives and contents their spirit, which had need of being revived and contented. Robinson, in his Personal Recollections of his tour with Wordsworth, says, "In the amphitheatre at Nismes, I observed his eyes fixed in a direction where there was the least to be seen; and, walking that way, I beheld two young children at play with flowers, and overheard him say to himself, 'Oh! you darlings, I wish I could put you in my pocket, and carry you to Rydal Mount.'" Rollin describes his own master at the university of Paris, as spending the last years of his life at Compiègne, consecrating himself entirely to the service of the children of the town, having almost every day some one or other of them at his table, giving clothes and prizes to many of them, and acting, he says, in that respect, like Gerson, the chancellor of the same university, whose latest works were composed for children, and who made himself master of a poor school at Lyons, as if to fulfil the object of his own treatise, "De Parvulis ad Christum trahendis." "Some persons," said the chancellor in that little work, "blame me for this; they allege the disparity of my manners and those of boys; they allege the dignity of my office

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that demands greater things; they blame the place and the time, and they fear that so unusual a thing may lead to my being calumniated; but to them I answer, it is true my manners are not those of boys, but if I can benefit them I ought to make my manners like theirs, and lower myself more and more, for

> 'Non bene conveniunt nec eadem sede morantur
> Majestas et amor.'

If there be not love, of what use will be my instruction? Therefore, I must lay aside majesty, and make myself little to the little. Christ did not intend to give us a trifling lesson, when He called to Him the children, embraced them, placed his hands on them, and blessed them. O pious Jesus! who after this will be ashamed to be humble to little ones? and elate with his greatness and his science, who will dare to slight the littleness, ignorance, or weakness of the young? Truly, the example of Christ is more than that humble humanity, so praised by the philosophers in Socrates, who did not blush after public cares to be seen playing with little boys, and riding on a cane. Oh! if our censorious Catos had seen that, how they would have laughed him to scorn! Christ, who sat alone in a common way with the Samaritan woman, detests the pride of those who will not open their mouths till they have a grand audience. Besides, I deny that, in coming to the assistance of children, I am derogating from the office of chancellor, in letting myself down irrationally, even though I should be seen playing with them*." In Lyons, therefore, did he continue during the last four years of his life, to pass his time when not with children in complete solitude, so that he dwelt like a hermit in the midst of the people. But with children he would consort, while many said "ad quid perditio hæc?" With them he found a sweet refreshment, a peace which God imparted, and a leisure that was not unprofitable. The day before his death, feeling that it was near, he called the boys together, who were as usual in the church for mass, and having closed the door, standing in the midst of them, he desired that they should

* De Parvulis ad Christ. trahend.

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say with him this prayer in French, "Dieu, mon créateur, ayez pitié de vostre pauvre serviteur, Jéan Gerson."

Men, no doubt, can bear a good deal in the way of intellectual disgust; they will haunt for a long time the assemblies of the learned, and penetrate to the halls of magnates; but, even though they do not arrive at the conclusions of the Duc de Saint-Simon, who said of something similar, that this was "se montrer à soi-même pied à pied le néant du monde," and that "c'est se convaincre du rien de tout," it will often happen in the end that they will tire of both, and feel an absolute need of those fresh fountains of innocent intelligence and simple overflowing affection, which are yielded by the mind and heart of common unsophisticated youth. Even while the delusions of life are at their full, these sources of pure happiness will often be appreciated. Minucius Felix speaks of the sacrifice one makes in leaving the society of children, who are but learning to express themselves grammatically,—"annis adhuc innocentibus, et adhuc dimidiata verba tententibus, loquelam ipso offensantis linguæ fragmine dulciorem." Men, of course, will hurry away to the forum and the senate, to the court, to the camp, to the scenes of dissipation or of commercial industry; that home the virtuous speak of they will fly from:

> "Impell'd with steps unceasing to pursue
> Some fleeting good, that mocks them with the view;
> That like the circle bounding earth and skies
> Allures from far, yet as they follow, flies;"

but when they have rolled about, toiled like pilgrims round this globe of earth, wearied with care, and after vainly affecting the way to Olympus, overworn with age, there is a spot, however far or long left behind them, remembered in the heart's deepest core,

> "A spot which vainly they have sought to find,
> A spot to real happiness consign'd;
> Where their worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
> May gather bliss to see some others blest,"

a spot to which if return to it be denied them, they will look to, as Adam looked back on Paradise—the Children's Bower.

But enough of this. The prelude is ended; and now me-

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thinks, lying under the shade of a wide-spreading beech, I feel playing round my temples the breeze

> "That gave soft music from Armida's bowers,
> Mingled with fragrance from her rarest flowers."

We have come to the spot I spoke of, the spot selected by the children,

> "Where nested is an arbour, overwove
> By many a summer's silent fingering;
> In whose cool bosom they used to bring
> Their playmates, with their needle broidery,
> And minstrel memories of times gone by *."

If you would rather hear its description from a learned poet, using terms not quite consonant with the language of this place, you may take it from Spenser, where he says,—

> "And in the thickest covert in that shade,
> There was a pleasant arbour, not by art,
> But of the trees own inclination made,
> Which knitting their rank branches part to part,
> With wanton ivie-twine entail'd athwart,
> And eglantine and caprisfole emong,
> Fashion'd above within her inmost part,
> That neither Phœbus' beams could through them throng,
> Nor Æolus' sharp blast could work them any wrong."

The spot may, in fact, be any where; for, like the school of the palace with the old Carlovingian, this academy of our little happy kings is migratory; it may be held between rocks or a few twisted stumps of trees;

> "Among leaves, which whispered what they could not say;"

or at the end of a fair garden, or ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι, or in a boat, or on great stones, as on a turret's top, or in a meadow near the shore, a pleasant shore where a sweet clime is breathed from a land of fragrance, quietness, and shrubs and flowers, full of calm joy every where. The child has a Virgilian love for beautiful spots; the taste of a wren for all sweet leafy shelter. He cries continually, at least, in the vernacular,

> "——— O qui me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
> Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!"

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* Keats.

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Come, sing me "The Glades of Windsor:"—

"Oh! fond is remembrance of time long departed;
Come, sit by my side, and the days I'll recall,
When the present was bright to the young and true-hearted,
And the fast-coming future seem'd brighter than all*."

Alas for some, that such memories should already raise a pang! But nature will out in spite of us; and now, perhaps, we cannot see even that picture representing a party of young people seated and lying on the grass to take refreshment, on some holiday, without a tear starting down as we thread our way through the crowded gallery.

"O reader! I am here the simplest voice,
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone."

But though "monuments themselves memorials need," my object in this book, as I said in the beginning, is to fix, as photographic artists say, and in a certain sense perpetuate the joy; to catch the fugitive graces of the place, not as singular, or more deserving of record than in other instances, but as nearer to the writer, and to transfer them to a comparatively enduring tablet; that what is sung, looked, uttered, whispered here may remain, in some sort, a possession like those golden and silver images that Vulcan made,

Ἀθανάτους ὄντας καὶ ἀγήρως ἤματα πάντα,

or like those smiling images on the Grecian urn, addressing which, when he congratulates them for their perpetuity, the poet says,—

"Fair child, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare.
Ah! happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu:
And happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new†."

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* Mackay. † Keats.

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CHAPTER II.

HE happy valley! Well, really, for a moment you might think the first site chosen for our bower deserved the name given to it by the children. The hill's sides are clothed with hazel woods, sloping between cultivated fields; and the ravine is so serpentine, that you can never see far in any direction. The bleak world, with its east wind, seems quite shut out. Then the ground along which the path guides you, is inlaid with bright gems from the wild flowers, which you must know as a botanical fact are here of singular beauty; and, moreover, if you have a squirrel's taste, at each stile, if you venture to stand on it, you run a good chance of being regaled with filberts. Here in the corners sheltered from the cold, primroses, they tell us, are found as early as in the first or second week of January; so soon does nature send us some cheerful harbinger, to hold out the promise of sunny days and genial showers, even in the wintry season, and these plants throwing out bunches of genuine spring leaves, enfolding some half-expanded primrose buds. At present, and as we know the place, all is only in sweet summer-time fragrance and profusion; so between the boughs you may suppose the bower placed, for this day ready to receive us; but, as I already observed, it will be migratory, and not found twice in the same place; for, like your birds, we mean to shift our bush.

To begin, then, by placing ourselves in presence partly of the ideal, or one might say of types, for even what is real partakes often in the mind more or less of that universal character, and therefore we offend not against truth by the proposal, which is very necessary, in order to prevent us from appearing to introduce matters that ought to be concealed; let us approach this group of children, seated beneath the spreading oak, or at the mossy couch near the fountain, breaking from the turf; and let us quietly observe what is to be observed by any one that looks on. The title of "Children's Bower" is

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not to imply that it is only children who will observe and speak all through the book; we must suppose that there are visitors, as grave and wise as ever you can wish, or even think yourself to be, who, from the suggestive things before them, can draw their own conclusions. Perhaps this plan, reader, is not what you would have recommended. Nothing more probable. But we can't help it; so it must be for all that. As the old man in the fable said to his son, let us jog on as we choose:—

> "Proceed, my boy, nor heed their farther call;
> Vain his attempts, who strives to please them all."

But let us observe, first, who are to be with us here, and how many of them are there. You know, on an occasion of this kind, one must suppose some real characters, and not be content with mere abstractions. I will not say, therefore, with Prospero, that "these our actors are all spirits," that at a breath can melt into air; but, on the other hand, for many obvious reasons, they must not be questioned too closely. We are seven, they will reply to our first demand, which may be excused; yes, without taking the answer from Wordsworth, or choosing the mystic number to denote that we have in view the whole universe of such bowers—seven, which in their case implied, as Plato would say, their being one, though in a different sense from his *, and though three *ὠκυμοροί* are already plumed with angels' wings. But, hush! at least of the last two departures, not a word now. We have not been to the funeral, and we anticipate no such solemnity. There is then the first taken, whom we must allow to be absent as far as our senses can perceive, for us almost a name alone, though not the less a blissful creature, eternally existing, and perhaps even here a loving and a close observer. There is next, whom, alas! we are at liberty to praise for the reason known to you already, the visible angel of the house, whose names—John, Gerald, conjoined with Mary,—it is still a delight to utter; the boy of eight years, "the sweetest companion that ever man bred his hopes out of," so loving and so joyous that none need dread the depth of his dark meditative eye,—

* Parmenides.

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"Submissive to the mighty verse
And the dear voice of harmony,
By none more deeply felt than he!"

Then, what Children's Bower is without some one that we may suppose to be his love and his delights; the little sister next to him in age, May perhaps, as he himself will call her, whom nature seems to have appointed for his inseparable companion? How vivid, yet how delicate her glee! How arch, how frolicsome! no living man need fear the worst of fortune's malice were she at his side, wanting only a wand to be a fairy—

"She in benign affections pure,
In self-forgetfulness secure,
Sheds round the transient harm, or vague mischance,
A light unknown to tutored elegance."

Then we may paint to ourselves from fancy a fourth, no less apt to be found in such a circle, some gentle taller one, a creature flowing with what might be appropriately termed the oil of gladness, "oleam lætitiæ," a sensitive creature, whose little girlish fears it is delightful to behold; a child of nature, with a heart inspired with the love of all beautiful, all glorious, all quiet or impassioned things:—

"Features to old ideal grace allied,
Amid their smiles and dimples dignified;
Fit countenance for the soul of primal truth,
The bland composure of eternal youth."

For fifth, we may suppose that kind of boy which every one has met somewhere; my Lord Lack-beard, grave and courageous, *περὶ μὲν θείειν ταχύς*, and since we may give him one name as well as another, the Podas okeus Tenelmus, yet for all his fleetness, the Mentor of the flock, serious and firm, very steady, though as a skip-ditch his leaps make his youngest brother proud of him. I want a sixth, whom to paint from imagination only will not, perhaps, be quite so void of difficulty, although the mould is never broken. We must try to imagine dignity and grace combined in a tall girl, with a mind well stored, like those we read about in mediæval histories, as skilled in many tongues, and able to discourse with scholars in their own Latin; possessing a deep heart of nature's moods of gran-

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deur and solemnity, and light and shade; words which I picked up from a verse which I happily did not cast away, though little suspecting that I should live to have need of them, when we were to see her one day like sorrow's monument,

> "With each anxious hope subdued
> By maiden's gentle fortitude,
> Each grief, through meekness, settling into rest."

In fine, for seventh, we may for a sad reason cease drawing on our fancy, and merely describe what was, and what, alas! may now be spoken of without a veil; for here is the hero of the group so loved, that his character can verify the etymology of the word ἥρως, as Plato derives it, saying that it is only slightly drawn aside from the word "love," ἔρως. Here is the tall, gay, gallant brother, τοῦπερ χαριεστάτη ἥβη, the pride of all these young hearts, though himself the humblest of the humble; the lover of horses and boats, and nets and guns, the gentleman, as common persons that know him say, "every inch of him." The gay songster, and the skilled on the sweet silver cornet. The inspirer of joy wherever he enters. What, perhaps some one will exclaim, the tall brother! Are we to admit him into the bower? Why not, pray? There, amongst the rest, he was planted from an infant; yes, dear lad, believe it; for they shall yet belie thy happy years, that say thou art a man. Why, good stranger, he was a child but yesterday; and he shall not pass here for what he desires to be thought, in spite of all his artifice of dress to ape the grown-up man, and a thousand other raw tricks familiar to his age. Even the chance comer, who now sees him for the first time, is struck with what he terms the childlike innocence of his face and manners. Of course, he belongs to the bower, notwithstanding his stable and his horses, his dog-cart, of which he had two months' fruition, and his pipe, for you see them all that way now. I grant that to spy him from afar, sauntering along with a band of swells, or, as Virgil would more elegantly say, "magna juvenum stipante caterva," a stranger might, for a moment, set him down as being only another of them, Ἄλλος—*νέων ὑπερηνορεόντων*, and quite an improper candidate for a place here with the children; but, for all that, those who are well acquainted with him know

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the contrary; for, though all heartiness, he is not stubborn; he can exalt and prize a virtue better than his life; and though not learned, he still ever loves

> "That holy mother of all issues good,
> Whose white hand, for a sceptre, holds a file,
> To polish roughest customs; and in him
> She has her right."

Truly the children will claim him as their bower-mate, and they have right to do so; for there is a secret link that binds him to his little brother's heart and to his sister's heart, the same as to his mother's heart; there is at the bottom the same notions of what is decorous and what is not; and when these loved ones are absent, in presence of his companions he will give utterance to things, that in consequence of his hatred of professions like those of Goneril and Regan his own home will not hear from him. Ay, at a cricket-match, in a ride home from hunting in the dark, in a boat at sea, or wading without shoes and stockings up to his middle in a river, or, stranger still, at a mess dinner, though with face not yet valanced, an admired guest, the tender sprig of the bower will out; for never leaves him the secret desire of imitating, like a child, what he thinks right in the domestic and hereditary way of thinking, in his family traditions and first impressions, though he won't be introducing it unless there be a strong occasion for his doing so. Pull aside the boughs, then, and let in, by all means, the boy that was, the brother that is, the child that shall be; and, besides, the truth is, they cannot long do well without him; though now that he is in, you may as well close back the branches silently, lest, like door-keepers, jostled and forced by a throng of people, we should see rush in more than we are willing or prepared to meet. Yes, if you will keep the secret, a right of entry here does not altogether depend upon being a child in years. Mature age may present no impediment, since "semper bonus homo tiro est;" and, at all events, every true Christian might claim a place with the young people, as well as the littlest and freshest amongst them; which secret is blabbed by that old author, Oultreman, saying, though for this once I would try to stop his voice by putting not one finger,

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but my whole hand across his mouth, "j'appelle tous les Chrestiens enfans, tels que voirement ils doivent estre non sensibus, sed malitia *."

The first thing, then, to observe silently under these boughs, that which must strike every one, and from which, however commonplace the notice of it may be thought at first, the most valuable knowledge for every one of us may be derived, is the charm of innocence, the immeasurable importance of retaining a clear conscience, or of recovering it, for it can be recovered, if once forfeited.

"Ah, fair delight! that o'er my soul
On mem'ry's wing, like shadows, fly!
Ah, flowers! which joy from Eden stole,
While innocence stood smiling by †!"

Here it is not all memories of early life that I invoke where certain winds reign. The author of mischief is seldom found sleeping even under a hedge best sheltered. Memory in this company with some might present not resemblances but contrasts, such as the man Elia never contemplated when contented with "the child Elia," that other, himself in the background, whose remembrance he cherished. It might lead one to inquire how it comes that some children differ in so many points, and so essentially from other children. Persons who look on, though nearest to the circle here, may remember mounting wild cattle on the mountains, like Sir Astley Cooper, when a boy, may remember sitting on a caged lion, the great Nero, whose awful eyes followed them as they rose from his back to stand upright in the den,—may remember swimming across the Rhine when but mere lads, climbing Alpine precipices when companions feared to follow them,—may remember frolics, artlessness, and affection; but the innocence and purer charity, and all the other graces we shall witness here of such childhood, ah! that's quite another thing. However, it is the present that we should regard; and we have only here to look at what is before us to feel the power and the charm of innocence—holy innocence; to behold those who, clothed in human shapes, can teach mortality, not by cold precepts, forgot as soon as told, but by ex-

* Le pédagogue chrestien. † Coleridge.

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amples, to imitate the pureness, and draw near to the celestial nature of creatures that are more than man. Here we can behold in life what is commemorated in the Roman catacombs as the character of the Christian children there entombed, on whose graves were written such words as "Anima dulcis et innocens;" "parvulus innocens;" "agnellus Dei;" "agnella innocens;" "palumba sine felle *," and the like. Call that little John, for John Gerald is the child of eight years already spoken of; he's a sweet-faced boy as one shall see in a summer's day; a thousand blessings dance upon his eyes—

> "But if you knew the implicit innocency
> Dwells in his breast, you'd love him like your pray'rs."

Call him then, "Incipe, parve puer;" you will soon find that he does not even know what sin, or vice, or crime mean; in all things that refer to them he is ignorance itself, though, if he hears of any one acting in a general way improperly, he has no rest, contriving by what secret prayers to Heaven and little desires of his own he may be instrumental in leading the wanderer back to the right road. With gaze earnest and mournful he looks at an offender; but though he should unmuzzle all his wisdom, he can't be made to comprehend that any one should knowingly act wrong. Such children may be said to know not evil; and so St. Augustin explains the words of the Psalmist, "Things that I know not," meaning sins †.

Observe the modesty of the young, and contrast it with that of their prudent distrustful elders who so often need the admonition of the pagan Cicero, saying, "erubescunt pudici etiam loqui de pudicitia." Now if you say that, or any thing about it, little John used to cry out, when something was proposed that to his childish thought seemed indecorous, "I will go away; too bad to tease me like that!" The thing in his mind, though he was too bashful to speak of it, was the state of Ulysses when he made land, and said,

> ——————— αἰδέομαι γὰρ
> Γυμνοῦσθαι, κούρῃσιν ἐϋπλοκάμοισι μετελθών.

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* Northcote, Rom. Catac. † In Ps. xxxiv.

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It was the observation of such traits that dictated the well-known line of Juvenal—

"Maxima debetur puero reverentia."

When the young walk forth at eventide it is, like the mediæval knights, to hear the birds sing. Their elders laugh to hear of paying court to nightingales; indeed, the very hours that children keep, which are those of the birds, might alone attest their innocence. "The voices of children seem as natural to the early morn as the voice of the birds. The suddenness, the lightness, the loudness, the sweet confusion, the sparkling gaiety seem alike in both. The sudden little jangle is now here and now there; and now a single voice calls out to another voice, and the boy is off like the bird*." The young of course like naturally enough to explore a little about them, and to know what's going on near them; but in general even places must look innocent at the times they enter them; they are not to be sought for in evil haunts—

νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην, ὅτε θ' εὕδουσι βροτοὶ ἄλλοι.

They are all tucked up in their beds while darkness rests over the town. If you catch them napping before the proper time, you'll find they sleep well. In Shakspeare's "Julius Cæsar" the boy Lucius dreams of his lute while the murdered man and the murderer hold converse. And then what blessed peace still hovers round them. Look, I must repeat it, at little John. Mild is his life, though a more blusterous birth had never babe, for it was in Paris amidst barricades and firing of cannon that he came into the world. Quiet and gentle are his conditions, though he was the "rudeliest welcom'd to this world that ever was any child." Even that tall brother, who can suspect no evil, who is "remiss, most generous, and free from all contriving," who hath every month a new sworn brother, has innocence in his eyes and in the sound of his voice, the sure index of what is in his heart. "I knew him," writes a priest who himself gave up riches and title and all worldly honours to be God's minister, "I knew him, and young as he was he left an

* L. Hunt.

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impression on me which I can never forget. Such innocence, such an entire absence of all selfishness, such goodness of heart I have rarely met with even in children. I remember, as if it were but yesterday, how he acted as my guide in Paris, and the interesting conversations we had together; for he was singularly intelligent. What struck Hurter the historian most in him, as he told me lately, was his innocence."

"God has made the summer and the spring," says the Psalmist, "that is," adds St. Augustin, "the fervent and the young in faith. Remember, O my God, this creature that thou hast made." It is delightful to think that what some may dislike in children and youth, from blending it with their own dark fears, and darker suggestions, may be all the while beautiful and pleasing to Him who made them!—but there is a nervous dread which exaggerates all ground of fear; and there is a severity of censoriousness, a vice of age, that "gives no allowance to the feelings of early life, that expects artfulness from childhood and constancy from youth, that is peremptory in every command, and inexorable to every failure." There are many who live merely to hinder happiness, as if long life produces only suspicion, malignity, peevishness, and persecution. Coriolanus says,

> "——————— my young boy
> Hath an aspect of intercession, which
> Great nature cries, Deny not."

It is certain that the last and greatest, or rather the only important, boon, that of an eternity of bliss, will not be denied those who leave the world with such dispositions. The Père de Neuville has left a celebrated sermon "Sur le Jugement universel," in which he analyzes, with terrible distinctness, the motives and thoughts and actions of men. When you have read it you will observe that he is evidently unable to find any thing personal to allege against children or the young; not a single item among their qualities does he present as a prelude to justify his fearful conclusions so often iterated—"videant turpitudinem."

> "How oft doth life grow less by living long?
> And what excelleth but what dieth young?"

Childhood, when inspired as it is here, is like a shadow of the

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golden age of the poets, which of its own accord, and without law, "fidem rectumque colebat." Happy days! days of peace and innocence! days so much more worthy of our regrets as perhaps we do not regret them; yet grieve sometimes will even the young as they see them pass away. A few years before his death, René-Marie-Albert de Jouenne d'Esgrigny, hearing an older boy wishing that his own education might be soon finished, told him not to be in such a hurry to grow up, and evinced by a gesture that he for his part desired to have such a time before him. Such an example may be less common; but in later life attentive observers generally know the value of those fleeting and rapid years in that first garden of our simpleness where we spent our childhood, when the heart is ignorant of the drunkenness and seduction of the passions, or rather, perhaps, of the will which throws the blame on them; when grace having prepared the soul for receiving the seeds of virtue, we hear of faults only to dislike them, of religion only to venerate it, of God only to love Him; when to each can be addressed these lines of the poet—

"Thy dress was like the lilies,
And thy heart as pure as they;
One of God's holy messengers
Did walk with me that day *."

In fact, as it is only iniquity that separates us from our Creator, according to the remark of St. Augustin†, "Children must be very near Him to whom they pray;" for, as an old writer says, "their innocence is the most entire relic of our primitive integrity, and most perfect pattern of our future felicity." "Childhood," as Boniface says, describing a Christian boy, "has a joyful countenance, a virginal modesty, a pure conversation, innocence of life, candour of mind, hilarity of conscience." It is young persons, above all others, who therefore verify the celebrated text, "Beati immaculati in via qui ambulant in lege Domini." In the innocence of Christian children and the young can be witnessed what a great author designates as "the expression of a self-restrained liberty, to which he traces one part

* Longfellow. † In Ps. cxxxvii.

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of the beauty of God's creation,—an image of that divine perfection which, though free to work in arbitrary methods, works in consistent methods, or, following his idea, we might compare that energetic innocence to those sculptured leaves and flowers so confined within fillets as to exhibit a willingness to submit to the prescribed limits, and even a predisposition in themselves to fall into the ordained form, an anticipation of the authority, and an instant and willing submission to it in every fibre and spray; not merely willing but happy submission, as being pleased rather than vexed to have so beautiful a law suggested to them, and one which to follow is so justly in accordance with their own nature, where the spirit of the encompassing triangle is so put into the plants, which seem to suck in isoscelescism with their sap, that you might take your terminal line away if you will, there being no need for it any more, the commandment being written on the heart of the thing*." Children have not the horrible phrenzy to feel a longing to taste a thing because they are told it is dangerous. Such is the strange and inconceivable inclination of many grown-up persons. As soon as the highest authority tells them that the poison of hell is mixed with any thing, and as soon as a holy charity warns them to fly from it, they feel attracted towards it†. When a child dies, alas! alas! all that he leaves behind him is redolent of his docility to holy lessons and of innocence. You'll find nothing sinister in his drawers or pockets; if very young it is a toy-horse perhaps with three legs, a ball, or some tin soldiers, or an Indian-rubber whip, or a round pebble that he kept as a memento of a favourite spot; it will be the presents of his parents, of his brothers and sisters: his chaplets and his prayer-books, his dresses laid up for Sundays; if adolescent, it will be a private journal of what leaps he has taken, what rivers swam across, what fox-brushes carried off, a sort of Peppian diary, but with no indelicacies for any one to wish to expunge; it will be a little superabundant provision for smartness in the way of coats and ties and caps, "pour s'adoniser;" perhaps we shall come to an entry in the diary like that which was found, after the eldest of these children

* Ruskin, Stones of Venice.

† Le Père Boutaud, Conseilles de la Sagesse.

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departed, in his boyish handwriting, "My first high hat was bought in Bristol on this day, Tuesday."

Children are what almost visible grace renders divine men, and they are that without contrition or the shadow of remorse.

> "Guilty passion and cankering care
> Never have left their traces there."

Childhood, indeed, like nature, is fallen. Like the air we breathe, like the spring that cheers us, like the rose that charms our senses, it has its insidious evil from which it is never secure; but its opening reason and affections are imperceptibly and divinely controlled, and it is wholesome as generally the mountain breeze, beautiful as a May morning, lovely and fragrant as the flower.

The first lesson, then, which grown-up people may receive from a visit to the Children's Bower will sound very commonplace; it is the happiness of being innocent, and of retaining a clear conscience, or, if they should have forfeited that crown, the importance of recovering that peace of conscience, which in some measure amounts to its restoration.

"I think," says a great writer, "that of the weaknesses, distresses, vanities, and sins which often, even in the holiest men, diminish their usefulness and mar their happiness, there would be fewer if in their struggle with nature fallen they sought for more aid from nature undestroyed*." "Hear, and be like children," says St. Augustin, preaching on the Psalms. Were we to judge from the impressions of most people when they look on a scene like this, of which God Himself creates the peace, we might suppose that the invitation involved no difficulty in the case of those to whom it was addressed; for it is natural to wish to imitate what we cannot help admiring, and therefore we are advised by some to verify in this very respect the divine words, "With the holy you will be holy, and with the innocent you will be innocent†."

> "Innocence, the sacred amulet
> 'Gainst all the poisons of infirmity,
> Of all misfortune, injury, and death;

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* Ruskin. † Adolescens Mariano-Academicus.

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That makes a man in tune still in himself;
Free from the hell to be his own accuser;
Ever in quiet, endless joy enjoying,
No strife nor no sedition in his powers;
No thought 'gainst thought; nor (as 'twere in confines
Of wishing and repenting) doth possess
Only a wayward and tumultuous peace:
But, all parts in him friendly and secure,
Fruitful of all best things in all worst seasons,
He can with every wish be in their plenty."

And in truth what a mysterious delusion must it be to give up willingly that which really, and not in the way of affectation, excites the love and admiration of every beholder, and without which we know, as an experimental certainty, that no peace or happiness, or even gaiety, can exist on earth. Nevertheless, you see how this world goes: the phenomenon, however mysterious as it unquestionably is and ever will be, is unceasingly renewed; and so our fangled world is a garment nobler than that it covers.

The ancients compared human life to the letter Y, as it is always doubtful which of the two ways men will take. When the children's way is forsaken, darkness comes over the mind of the man transgressing; and there is a resolution to brave or forget all consequences. "The judgments of God are taken from before his eyes. He imagines," says St. Augustin, "that God does not judge man, though his own actual state is one of the most fearful judgments that can be conceived*." For a time he even contrives in some degree to escape from the extreme pressure of that weight of conscience; "qua sublata," as Cicero says, "jacent omnia†." "Only those," he says, "will be condemned who crucified Christ." "Well, I agree with you," says St. Augustin; "yes, I dare to say it; only those will be condemned. Then sinners may reply, 'We are safe.' Yes, you are safe," continues the holy Father, "if God does not judge men by their hearts. But attend to this. The Jews saw and crucified Jesus Christ; but you who resist his Word, would you not crucify his flesh if you saw it? They despised Him on

* In Ps. ix. † De Nat. Deorum.

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the cross, and you despise Him seated in heaven *." Retain innocence then, say these several voices from the bower, if you would retain peace of mind, without which nothing will profit you.

> " ——————— Every crime
> Has, in the moment of its perpetration,
> Its own avenging angel—dark misgivings,
> An ominous sinking at the inmost heart †."

Sooner or later, besides, a man will be constrained to judge himself as the world itself will judge him in the Day of Judgment. Perhaps you never thought of this before. What is the Day of Judgment? "It is," says the Père de Neuville, "the offender before the tribunal of the world, when the world will know the offender as God knows him, and where the world will judge the offence as God judges it."

But even in a visible and material sense, so inevitably does the loss of innocence bring punishment, that there is no separating them in one's imagination; and therefore Pacuvius said to his son Perolla, "Per ego te, fili, quæcumque jura liberos jungunt parentibus, precor quæsoque, ne ante oculos patris facere et pati omnia infanda velis,"—Do not wish to do and suffer evil—"facere et pati"—as if both were inseparable. St. Augustin does not hesitate to say that the loss of an innocent will brings more misery than all the good that fortune can bestow on us—"Plus enim mali pravitas voluntatis affert quam fortuna cuiquam boni."

Nevertheless, men will too often insist on breathing another atmosphere besides that of the bower myrtles; and therefore the second part of the lesson consists in teaching us to recover innocence, if we should have lost it, and to seek this recovery not in a way of indifference, but with as much speed and longing of the heart as may be.

Why in regard to innocence and a clear conscience, which are then of such inestimable worth to ourselves, are not all of us like the young? It is,—not to enter on ground forbidden to such feet as ours,—that the sort of aggregate thing called the world, deceives, corrupts, and captures us with its notions, maxims, usages,

* In Ps. xlviii. † Wallenstein.

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and examples. Plato compares it to a great beast. It is that whoever on growing up admits pride into his heart, flies from the association of the Children's Bower, saying, in old Homer's words, "All that might have done formerly well enough,"—

ἐγὼ δ' ἔτι νήπιος ἦα,
Νῦν δ' ὅτε δὴ μέγας εἰμὶ, καὶ ἄλλων μῦθον ἀκούων
Πυνθάνομαι.

It is that men try to content their consciences in a private station, with the innocence of convention, requiring only each to be like what he fancies every one else to be; if in a public station, with "the great innocence of authority and government," as the ambassador of Henry IV., Antoine de la Boderie, ironically qualified the voluntary self-deceptions of De Villeroy, the courtier and minister. The very heathens threw most of the blame on the same sinister kind of school. Cicero ascribes what is evil in the young, which I hope we need not quarrel with him for calling a departure from nature, to the bad examples and lessons of masters, to the errors of poets, to popular opinions, and to the influence of the multitude consenting to vices*. "There are," he says, "innate seeds of virtue in our minds, only they are not suffered to grow up; for as soon as we come to the age of reason we are made conversant with all depravity and with perversity of opinions, so that we seem to suck error with our nurse's milk; then we are handed over to such masters and teachers, that truth yields to vanity and nature itself to opinion. The very poets contribute to this condition; and, lastly, being subjected to the people as the finishing master, the multitude on all sides consenting to vices, we finally depart from nature altogether, and give ourselves up to what we have heard commended, as honours, and riches, and the rest †." In Christian times, if we do not adopt the extravagance of early and later sophists, the same explanation might in part be given. Children are led from the bower to be brought up any thing but what nature intended them for; they are to be changed into worldlings and pagans, or Donatists and Montanists, and into I know not what other adverse forms;

* Tuscul. iii. † Ibid.

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for they are to become mere forms, according as the interest, or passion, or delusion of their elders may direct; so that the admonition of St. Jerome continues as applicable as ever, when he said, "Let no one learn in a tender age what must be unlearned afterwards." Even where no intellectual misdirection is imparted, the passions of elders are sure to lay snares for the innocent. Therefore, taking a sorrowful view of the future which awaits him, a poet sings despondingly as follows:—

"Happy infant, early bless'd!
Rest in peaceful slumber, rest;
Early rescu'd from the cares
Which increase with growing years.
No delights are worth thy stay,
Smiling as they seem, and gay;
Short and sickly are they all,
Hardly tasted ere they fall.
All our gaiety is vain;
All our laughter is but pain,
Lasting only and divine
Is an innocence like thine."

There is an old morality entitled "The Worlde and the Chylde." The contrast is well conceived, for it would be hard to imagine a greater. Childhood, as we shall remark presently, is all simplicity and truth, but in the world, as those who know it say, all is comedy and acting a part; and every one dreads to let another know exactly what he is. "I fear not to assert it," says the Père de Neuville, writing I admit at a most sinister epoch, "however vain a man may be of himself, there is no one that would not rather be entirely unknown than perfectly known." This is not the case with children, or with those who learn from them how to discipline their minds. "In the world," as Shakspeare says, "if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary, every man may be the trumpet of his own virtues." But many think it best to dispense with both them and their reputation. They are ready for shipwreck of innocence in any form,—"Non omnes arbusta juvant, humilesque myricæ." Come, is there no young squarer now, that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

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"Ah! poor humanity! so frail, so fair,
Are the fond visions of thy early day
Till tyrant passion, and corrosive care
Bid all thy fairy colours fade away."

Well, the experiment has been made, the innocent will of the bower forfeited, the conscience involved in many reticulations. What is the result, now that, as Homer says, he knows the world?

ἤδη γὰρ νοέω καὶ οἶδα ἕκαστα,
Ἐσθλά τε, καὶ τὰ χέρεια· πάρος δ' ἔτι νήπιος ἦα.

The result is a verification of what we have just heard; it is proof experimental, personal, however he may wish to put on a cheerful face, while feeling in himself nothing but what he is,—bane and bad conscience, that the only thing to do, is to return with simplicity to his childlike state, if he wishes to be ever again happy, or even like a man; for while remaining as he is, "he must," as Cherry says, "treat his enemies with respect, his friends with indifference, and all the world with contempt; he must suffer much, and fear more; he must desire much, and hope little; in short, he must embrace his ruin, and throw himself away." We might add, as the climax, that if his heart be not quite deadened by his commerce with the world, he must find, to use the words of Lamb, "Innocence, no longer familiar to him, an awful idea."

"Learn here that peace from innocence must flow;
All else is empty sound, and idle show."

Whoever sacrifices the spirit of the bower to any interest, may even repent without extricating himself from the temporal consequences. He is in fact, as the poet says, "betrothed to unquietness." He is like Robinson Crusoe after finding the print of a man's foot on the sea-shore, when he came home to his fortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground he went on, but terrified to the last degree, looking behind him at every two or three steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and unable to describe how many various shapes an affrighted imagination represented things to him in; how many wild ideas were formed every moment in his fancy, and what strange unaccountable whimsies

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came into his thoughts by the way. Then he will learn practically the deep sense of Homer in calling sleep a gift, ὕπνου δῶρον. It is a gift that won't be granted to him; he will have murdered sleep, and will close his eyes in tranquillity no more until his change cometh, if it should ever come! "To dread no eye, and to suspect no tongue, is," says Johnson, "the great prerogative of innocence; an exemption granted only to virtue. But guilt has always its horrors and solicitudes; and to make it yet more shameful and detestable, it is doomed often to stand in awe of those to whom nothing could give influence or weight but their power of betraying." It must be admitted however, on the other hand, that "comme à la fin tout se sait dans les cours," as Saint-Simon says, repentant guilt can despise all temporal dangers, and even solace itself in being made known to the world as well as to itself; though even then, the weaning one's self from faults is not like retaining what is found in the bower. It is not every one that can resemble the Cardinal le Camus, amusing even in his repentance, and with all his self-imposed penances still "d'une compagnie charmante*." Alas! on the contrary, as some one says with an old poet, "sometimes when grown persons go about weaning themselves thus, there's no enduring the house with them: their weaning does so disorder them, there's no coming near them, so cross and gloomy do they become; and then often they don't do the business neither; for next day their faults are just where they were the day before."

Let us proceed, however, to observe how men should retrace their steps to the Children's Bower, and how innocence once forfeited should be regained.

The society of the Encyclopédie and the coterie of Baron d'Holbach denied the moral depravity of men, as a shrewd writer caustically adds, "with perhaps no very strict regard either to the evidence of their consciousness or of their observation†." No doubt, as the Père de Neuville says, "this tendency to sin with which we are all born, does not extinguish wholly the principles of justice and virtue which God Himself has

* St.-Sim. t. vi. 122. † Lord Brougham, Nat. Theol.

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graven in our souls." But the innocence of Christian childhood involves, we are told, more than that. "Judge me," said the Psalmist, "according to the innocence which comes to me from on high*." "That is the true innocence," adds St. Augustin, "and the love of what is opposed to innocence expires when the heart is converted." But that return needs the employment of a potent agency, and moreover involves, no doubt, in the beginning, at least, a great internal disturbance, to give it the gentlest name. "There is a temporal and passing confusion," says St. Augustin, "which is useful. Such is the trouble of a soul which beholds its sins, and feels horror at them, and blushes at the remembrance of them, and is corrected. Let no Christian fear this happy confusion. Let him only seek to avoid the confusion which will be for ever†." What do such holy men add? They are heard speaking to us thus:—You then, wanderer, whoever you may be, who behold with disheartened glances at your own condition the golden age of childhood and youth; you who feel yourself disqualified for enjoying or almost for contemplating its peace, suffer not the impressions which you experience to be fruitless. It is much that you can still admire what you do. Why not imitate it? "Repair yourself," as St. Chrysostom says; "there is yet time. Don't say it's too late. It is not too late. You are still on the ground. The people in the theatre are not yet risen. The doors are yet open. We have still leave to repair ourselves." How this return and restoration can be effected, it is the office of others to show. We have all heard of the night which "reddit innocentiam lapsis, et mœstis lætitiam;" we have all heard where those are to be found who minister in this form to our poor common humanity, and whose maxim it is that there are moments, as the Duc de Saint-Simon says, which the most severe ought to respect. Perhaps this will involve you in great sorrows, in great perplexities; but whatever may be the sacrifice, one must say of it, in the words of the same duke to the Duke of Orleans, "c'est pourtant l'unique chose à faire—Il n'y a que cela à faire, c'est l'unique porte,—dure, cruelle, mais

* Ps. vii. † In Ps. xxx.

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unique." It is the only way of recovering the spirit of the bower, and of attaining to an elevation, greater perhaps than you ever before enjoyed*; for, in fine, as the poet says,

"Heaven has a gentle mercy
For penitent offenders."

So can men, after their dear-bought experience, be led as it were by children's hands to a certain mysterious affinity with that state, which shall put an end to experiment, to disappointment, and to change. Are they so led? "Since they knew ill, they were not free till now."

In finishing this chapter, one must be ready to acknowledge, I think, the importance of this first lesson furnished by the little bower. Even the old dramatist will preach to thee, mark me, on this theme. The lesson was needed in the age of St. Augustin. Are we to suppose that it is not wanted in our own? You talk of all reforms but that of becoming like the young in regard to character, and yet, depend on it, without this, all other kinds will prove useless. "How," asks an eloquent contemporary, "from the mere vamping together of hostile voracities and opacities, never so dexterously or copiously combined, can, or could you expect any thing else? Can any man bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No man. Voracities and opacities, blended together, in never such cunningly-devised proportions, will not yield noblenesses and illuminations; they cannot do it†." Innocence! it is for maturity and age, it is for trade and philosophy, it is for art and commerce, it is for science and literature, it is for senates and empires to weigh the value of what can preserve or restore it! In the time of St. Augustin, paganism had left too many traces of its existence in every form for innocence not to be in constant danger. "I have only one word to add to you in closing the fiftieth Psalm," he says, "respecting this crowd of evils with which we are surrounded. For it is impossible to live in this world and be separated from all its disorders. We must therefore tolerate the wicked amongst whom we live, because while we were ourselves wicked the good who lived with us tolerated us. But for you, try in this deluge of evils, and in this detestable corruption of manners, to regulate

* Rom. viii. 5. † Carlyle.

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your families in a Christian manner, to bring up your children and conduct your houses virtuously. It is your duty to watch over your families, that you may give, one day, a good account to God of those subject to you. God loves regularity; He loves order. It is a very false and corrupt kind of innocence to give the reins to disorders. It is a foolish gentleness in a father, when a corrupt son draws the severity of God both on himself and on his father. Watch then over all belonging to you, and above all, over those children who are faithful and docile to your instructions. As for others, if they won't listen to you, they will have to answer one day for themselves *." He seems to conclude with the poet,

"The world is full of horrors, falsehoods, slights,
Woods and child's bow'rs have the true delights."

CHAPTER III.

TO-DAY we are in a sunny field, sloping down to the south, commanding a view over a little bay, that is now as blue as an Italian lake; we are seated under a clump of trees that cast a dark shade over a small standing pool, of which the water, though right muddy, is consequently so reflective, that, as Ruskin would say, there is quite a landscape in it. You can see in the bottom the boughs of the trees, and the grass of the projecting miniature peninsulas, and all manner of hues of variable pleasant light out of the sky; and you can see in it also the reflection of a smiling happy little boy, with perhaps a giant's face, stooping over him. This road-side pond has been made for watering cattle, and you trace the mark of their hoofs in all its harbours of refuge; but children hereabouts think it a kind of Mediterranean, expressly intended to receive their little ships. Such is the place chosen for our next conference, less known to many

* In Ps. l.

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who pass it by twice or four times a day, than to little Jack and his retriever; for there this good dog has to attend his master's orders in times of great emergency, when a calm coming on the lake, and the ship refusing to move from its centre, and canine intervention becoming necessary, she has to plunge into the water, and then with great delicacy, and a sort of mother's tenderness, to take up the unfortunate vessel in her mouth, and without snapping any of its masts, or spars, or cordage,—a thing, let me tell you, not very easy to accomplish, when it is in such a position,—to carry it to land, and place it gently at the owner's feet.

It is to be feared, notwithstanding all our eloquence, that the subject of the first two chapters of this book will lead some persons to conclude that we are discussing matters which, so handled, can interest babies alone; and perhaps some one like Thrasymachus, instead of reading on, will say, "Tell me, have you a nurse?" After so much talk, without any scientific phraseology, about innocence and conscience, when we proceed to consider, in the same style, childhood and youth in regard to simplicity and goodness, I suppose that we shall be thought only fit for going about ourselves in a perambulator. However, we shall advance presently to things of more show and splendour, though not perhaps of greater interest.

The simplicity like the innocence of early life has a great charm. "O happy age of childhood!" exclaims Bonifacius, "forgetful of injuries, in which is no sentiment that the tongue does not disclose; tolerant of evil, forgiving to enemies, communicative to all, demanding but little!" "Simplicity of heart is one of the two great attributes of boyhood," says Cardinal Palæotus. "Boys are even called 'pueri' from being pure; for they know no art of deception, they do not bear false witness, they do not envy, they do not defame; they think no evil, they heap up no treasures, they remember no injury, they bear no malice, and," still addressing the chief nobles of Bologna, he adds, "they make no distinction between a rich man and a poor man*." The young do not possess the quality which Pepys ascribes to Captain Holmes, "a cunning fellow, and one (by his

* De Bonon. Eccl. Admin. p. vii.

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own confession, to himself) that can put on two several faces, and look his enemies in the face with as much love as his friends." "Good God!" exclaims that observer, "what an age is this! and what a world is this! that a man cannot live without playing the knave and dissimulation!" Saint-Simon has many portraits, of which all the graces are spoiled by a certain cloud of falsehood which emanates, in spite of them, from their very pores, and even from their gaiety, which by reason of it saddens. And who, after living a little in the grown-up world of high life, or of formal life, has not, in spite of himself, a similar collection, not so much of his own forming, as of his own constrained acquirement? If the poet finds that in some things brute beasts have the advantage over men, what might we not say of the superior qualities of children?

"O'er plains they ramble unconfin'd,
No politics disturb their mind;
They eat their meals, and take their sport,
Nor know who's in or out of court.
They never to the levee go
To treat as dearest friend a foe;
They never importune his grace,
Nor ever cringe to men in place;
Fraught with invective they ne'er go,
To folks at Paternoster Row*."

The child, though like the eldest here he may be six feet in stature, hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for "what his heart thinks his tongue speaks." That poor youth at least, like Chaucer's knight,

"Lovede chyvalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie."

If "the first quality in a companion," as Sir William Temple observes, "be truth," he, and such as resemble him, ought to be chosen for that office.

"Free from self-seeking, envy, low design,
I have not found a whiter soul than thine†."

Alas! already how the secrets of the future will out in spite of

* Goldsmith. † Lamb.

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all precautions! How every noble theme recalls the memory of that lad of delicacy, of nice, gentle tact, without any views for himself and personal designs, and one that for the grown-up world was skilless as unpractised infancy! It is not he that knows what is tricky and subtle, hypocritical and mean,—

εἰδὼς παντοίους τε δόλους καὶ μήδεα πυκνὰ,—

it is not he that will appear generous, and think it sport to avoid the cost of being so; it is not he that will teach you to understand what worldliness means, unless indeed you can best feel its meanness and its horror by witnessing the character which is its exact opposite.

But to return to what is general. The young, though too often provoked by an indiscreet surveillance, are so constituted, that they would often rather die than utter an untruth. They hate falsehood, and they feel, as the Père Boutauld says, that it is "the most shameful of sins, the most insupportable to honour and to the conscience." "Qui ambulat simpliciter ambulat confidenter." Children and the young may be said literally even to walk with confidence. Their gait is enough to convince you that they do not take the paths of darkness and seduction, that they hate dissimulation and falsehood. The young are truthful to themselves, to others, to nature, and to grace. Comparatively speaking, they have no self-deceit, that odious vice which clings to the spiritual life in the mature. Have grown-up persons, then, who seem so often in the plot to gull themselves, nothing to learn from them, think you, in these respects?

The young never act a part; they are content to be themselves without thinking what that is. Is there no lesson for maturity in such a character?

The simplicity of childhood will have to be noticed all through this book, for it belongs to the joys of early life, to its sorrows, to its wisdom, to its piety, and to its faith; but we may here stop a moment to consider it generally in itself, as constituting one of youth's choicest attributes. Gerson, piercing at once to its root, has treated on the simplification of the heart *, and has shown its importance in the religious order. He exemplifies it by supposing a boy who had never seen his parents, living in a

* De Simplificatione Cordis.

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distant country, but who was in habits of receiving all sorts of favours from them. A good boy, under such circumstances, will be moved with natural affection towards them, though he knows of them only on the authority of others who speak of them. This boy will not curiously inquire about the colour, height, or other conditions of his father, but will love him, and bless him, and sigh after him. "So," adds Gerson, "can a Christian, after the manner of such a boy, be led to love God simply, and without involving himself in mere questions of curiosity. He will say with the child's simplicity, I only know that He is my Father, Benefactor, and Protector. This way," he concludes, "seems plain, common, royal, without dangers, or difficulties, or offence, and hence it arrives that the simple carry heaven, while the investigators of majesty either remain empty, or are oppressed by the glory. But as is said of God by the wise man, 'cum simplicibus graditur et cum ipsis est sermocinatio ejus *.'"

Men are often more struck with the simplicity of taste in the young than with the simplicity of their character. Perhaps some persons fancy they can more easily ridicule the former, and therefore they attack what they dislike on the side that is vulnerable; but though it undoubtedly presents the most salient form to invite attack, it is not the less capable of defence; for, in fact, children's notions even in respect to art are often just by reason precisely of their simplicity. It seems, perhaps, beside our purpose to remark it, but as this allusion has been made, we may observe, for instance, that the young are not offended by being presented with pictures of heaven and of human creatures glorified, and that by reason of this very docility to the lessons of religious art they prove themselves better philosophers than those who would suppose all such representations to be fantastic; for it is in accordance with true philosophy to believe that the works of God in the next life will have a certain analogy and conformity to what we see in the present.

What a pretty and profound though pure childlike thought was it of the old painters to represent little angels peeping down from the sky to mark how we go on in this world! and with

* De Simplif. Cordis.

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what advantage might this usage be even extended from religious to common scenes, as a fitting and most instructive commentary on them, to teach us a thousand things such as the old lesson, that the half is often more than the whole,—to make us love innocence and detest ambition! How many judgments might it be the cause of reversing! That young fellow standing bare-legged in the water, scrubbing so hard at his old boat, which does not prevent him from every now and then taking a sly look under it to feast his eyes as well as his ears with the band of musicians that are playing on the quay,—trait of juvenile poetry which no one in passing thinks of,—how would they smile looking down and watching him, as if remembering their old tastes! But those noble soldiers, marching to the sound of thrilling music in a spirit of duty and honour to fight in distant regions for the enrichment of capitalists, as Plato, but of course as no "patriot," would say,—how do you think they would look on them, already seeing what is awaiting so many of them on their arrival at the scene of action prepared for them before they were born by the flatterers and poisoners of states? Moreover, children can often best appreciate art precisely for the reason that they have so much simplicity as will enable them to confess that they enjoy things though others should say they ought not. Ruskin, in recommending this disposition, adds, "it is the child's spirit which we are most happy when we most recover." Even as artists, in their poor humble way, their works have this quality which he deems so needful, that they indicate strong liking, and that honestly. It is clear that whatever the thing be, they really love it and enjoy it, and say so plainly. He shows the advantages of having "a childish trust" that a picture does indeed represent a fact. "Let it be considered," he says, "whether the child, with its coloured print, inquiring eagerly and gravely which is Joseph, and which is Benjamin, is not more capable of receiving a strong, even a sublime, impression from the rude symbol which it invests with reality by its own effort, than the connoisseur who admires the grouping of the three figures in Raphael's 'Telling of the Dreams;' and whether also, when the human mind is in right religious tone, it has not always this childish power,—I speak

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advisedly, this power, a noble one, and possessed more in youth than at any period of after life, but always, I think, restored in a measure by religion,—of raising into sublimity and reality the rudest symbol which is given to it of accredited truth*." As with the common people, so with the young, truth is the test of literary as well as of artistic excellence. Mopsa represents them all when saying to the pedlar, "I love a ballad in print, a'-life; for then we are sure they are true." When the vendor cries, "Here's one to a doleful tune," the question immediately is, "Is it true, think you?" and he knows his customers so well that he appeals to them, saying, "Why should I carry lies abroad?" The ballad is very pitiful, and as true; and when asked, "Is it true, too, think you?" his reply indicates the same appreciation of their wants,—"Five justices' hands at it, and witnesses more than my pack will hold." The young read like Sir Roger de Coverley when he was busy all the summer upon "Baker's Chronicle." Their book is dear to them as truth; they enter into it with all their heart; every part of it goes down with them. René-Marie-Albert de Jouenne d'Esgrigny, after reading the life of St. Louis de Gonzaga, seeking, poor fellow, in his boyish way, to copy him as well as he could, wanted to wear all the winter a half-worn-out summer dress, which had to be taken away from him in consequence. Of course this was not exactly the trait most worthy of imitation in the patron of youth; but it is an instance in point to indicate this fervour which is so admirable. Could not manhood pick up something useful to itself here? "I would go fifty miles on foot," says an old writer, "to kiss the hand of that man whose generous heart will give up the reins of his imagination into his author's hands, be pleased he knows not why, and cares not wherefore." This spirit often renders young people the best judges of a book or of a conversation. They never take words either printed or spoken apart from what they make out in a way of their own to be the character of the person who uses them. While your regular critics, like great sillies, are mistaking jewels or fruits for dirt, they will know in an instant that his words are only the coating or the

* The Stones of Venice.

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shell, often too the best possible, of bright and happy thoughts,—that the violence is put on, the arrogance ironical, and that the censors so gravely denouncing what they hold between their finger and thumb, are as wide of the mark as if they thought to hit a man twelve miles off with a pop-gun. Simplicity, excluding all malevolence, does this for them.

But let us return to what is of more importance than the interest of art,—simplicity of character.

It is a wonderful privilege to possess unconscious conformity of mind and of will with what is right; to be able to love, to revere, to grieve, to rejoice, to perform, and to omit just because we do so, "and like the elements that know not what nor why, yet so effect rare issues by their operance," so to have our souls disposed towards what we were intended for. "The grand secret of men's ruin," says a great theologian, "lies in worldliness. That is the chief disturbing force, the prime counteracting power;" and he says, "It is remarkable that St. John, the chosen friend of the Incarnate Word, and the Evangelist of his Divinity, should be the one of the inspired writers who speaks most often and most emphatically about the world, as if the spirit of Jesus found something especially revolting to it in the spirit of the world." Now, by studying in the Children's Bower, men can learn to appreciate the beauty and the heroism, the commonness and the grandeur, of that opposite standard which simplicity unfolds. Such, in fact, is the charm of this spirit, that it disarms censure even when it meets with elements that introduce confusion into all its issues. Childhood secures indulgence for itself under all the diversity of circumstances, and enables the gravest and most thoughtful to love it even when placed in a state that to mature age would be fraught with danger, and perhaps too with subject for legitimate condemnation. "What," asks St. Augustin, "can a child do who is one day to be a citizen of Jerusalem, but who is for the time a captive? what can he do in his tender age? what can he love but what his father and mother tell him to love? They instruct him; they form him to avarice, to lies, to idolatry, to a thousand follies. What can a child do,—a tender soul that has eyes to see only what his elders see,—to do the same things, and to follow in their footsteps? Babylon," he adds, "persecutes us thus

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when we are little children *." How great then must be the good of simplicity, when it gives even to those who seem leagued against truth, almost the merit of being its persecuted defenders, and worthy of a place among those who suffer for the sake of justice!

Here then, again, we are presented in general with a trait of early life which cannot be too attentively studied or faithfully practised by men; for without simplicity, and even child-like simplicity, no one can be either good, or wise, or great. And therefore the Church, alluding to her own wisdom, on the Sunday which derives its name from the first word of the passage, says, "Quasi modo geniti infantes, rationabiles, sine dolo lac concupiscite." There is an opposite standard in the world which men who seek eminence, even in these very relations, are too apt to unfurl and gather round; but

> "——————— in its train
> Follow all things unholy—Love of gold,
> Ambition, Pleasure, Pride of place or name,
> All that we worship for itself alone †."

In certain states of society this opposing banner glitters from afar, even within the bower. "Alas!" says an observer of such times, "it is not of the little irregularities or imprudences of the young that I complain; it is their prudence, their wisdom, their foresight, their policy, I find fault with. They put on the livery of the world so early, and have so few of the weaknesses of feeling or of fancy." This comes of being children of art instead of remaining true to nature. But like children in happier circumstances, the good, the wise, and great are always simple. The illustrious Cauchy, for example, when anxious to avoid accepting a scientific position, for which he was unwilling to qualify himself by a political oath, is thus described by Biot: "He tried to ward it off by all the diplomatic address that he could think of, address which was only that of a child." In point of fact, as we remarked in the beginning, such persons are so like children, that they might pass in unchallenged to their bower. There are men with chins long vallanced, there

* In Ps. cxxxvi. † Willis.

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are old priests whose ways and style of conversation can remind one of this little John; they have the same simplicity, truthfulness, innocence, and cheerfulness, the same readiness to laugh and to be amused at trifles, the same love for observing and watching little common things, the same content and joy in the least and easiest and cheapest recreation, the same absence of all sham gravity, of all distempered longings, the same peace, and serenity, and love, and aptitude to admire without jealousy. Persons of this kind cannot conceal what is within them. Be it what it may, their countenance will tell it. Each can say of himself, "I cannot hide what I am; I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's licence; sleep when I am drowsy, and tend to no man's business; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour." The vulgar of high life do not understand such characters; there are even men in a category I would not name who seem as little to appreciate them. But all this, nevertheless, implies what men of great goodness, as well as of greatest intellectual capacity and genius, like best. "Under St. Louis a courtier could only become a politician," says the Père de Neuville, "by being frank, simple, and sincere." What will seem stranger to our upstarts, even at the court of Louis XIV., we might infer from a passage of Saint-Simon that the children's test and model of pleasing manners were upheld; "for," he says on one occasion, speaking of Madame de Vaudemont, "it was a person always occupied about her own grandeur or about her health, not in reality, but as a cloak for her designs; every thing weighed, every thing composed, every thing embarrassed; a disposition opposed to what is simple; a devotion placarded, full of ways and outside things; in a word, nothing sociable, nothing natural, nothing amiable *." Pomponne, minister of Louis XIV., so loved by all the foreign ministers, so adored even at the court, is described by the duke as a man "d'une simplicité des mœurs admirables †." He ascribes the same character to the Maréchal de Lorges, of whose conversion, after secretly consulting both Claude and Bossuet, he gives such interesting details ‡, and whose "natural simplicity"

* Tom. vi. 17. † ii. 323. ‡ iv. 49.

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seems to have been employed in producing it. Vauban was another whose simplicity of character this great painter of manners praises. It is still the same test he uses when, summing up the noble qualities of M. de Saint-Louis, he says of him, "I never knew a man whose heart was more straight, more simple, or more true*." Such persons have not the weight upon them which impedes others in every good direction. Alphonso, king of Arragon, used to say, that if he had lived in the time of the Roman republic, he would have advised the raising of a temple "Jovi positorio," where, before entering the senate, its members might have deposed their hatreds, perturbations, and cupidities; as if he had wished to imply that it was by becoming young again thus that they might have rendered the greatest service to the state, and preserved it. In which opinion Cardinal Palæotus coincides, only observing, "that St. Peter had already pointed out the same method in his words, 'Deponentes omnem malitiam et omnem dolum et simulationes et invidias et omnes detractiones;' by which sentence, indeed, he seems to call on them to become like young people; and he would leave some, perhaps, very little of their own to take with them into 'the house †.'"

The simplicity of early life is recognized by poets as furnishing a safeguard when men are placed in circumstances of greatest temptation. Therefore thinking that the other possesses it, Piccolomini says to Wallenstein—

> "There is a pure and noble soul within thee
> Knows not of this unblest, unlucky doing.
> Thy will is chaste, it is thy fancy only
> Which hath polluted thee—and innocence,
> It will not let itself be driv'n away."

To find this character we have not, in the present instance, to look to a distance. "Ce n'est pas à moi," writes an illustrious foreigner, "qu'il faut apprendre ce qu'était notre cher Tom. Quand je l'ai revu homme après une assez longue séparation, c'était encore la nature candide et franche de son enfance. Dans ma longue vie je n'ai pas rencontré des jeunes gens de

* Tom. xi. 247.

† Sermo ad Senatores et Magistratus.

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vingt-et-un ans tels que Tom." Like an earlier blossom of his race, he was indeed a fair example of untainted youth.

> "Just of his word, in ev'ry thought sincere,
> Who knew no wish but what the world might hear*."

This is the disposition which, above all, wisest poets invoke for those whom they best love, saying with Longfellow—

> "Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,
> In thy heart the dew of youth,
> On thy lips the smile of truth.
> O that dew, like balm, shall steal
> Into wounds that cannot heal,
> Even as sleep our eyes doth seal;
> And that smile, like sunshine, dart
> Into many a sunless heart,
> For a smile of God thou art."

What is all the polished or eloquent language of orators and philosophers compared with the expression of a frank and innocent nature! "I have often wished," says Lamb, turning from the former, "that I lived in the golden age, when shepherds lay stretched upon flowers,—the genius there is in a man's natural idle face, that has not learned his multiplication-table! before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries got into the world†." "Love and tongue-tied simplicity," says some one, "speak most to my capacity." And yet with all this charm there is something in it that awes. Yes, next to what we can imagine it would be to hear speak God Himself as to Moses, the most conscience-striking and impressive thing in the world is to hear speak a human heart. Among grown-up people it is not often that we hear it; but we do hear it sometimes. An academician can hear it speak in some aged priest, one of your old school, from the altar. A king, if he is not unlucky in his choice, can hear it from the lips of a director in the confessional; as when the Père de la Chaise, as the king himself related, replied to Louis XIV., who reproached him for his over great goodness, "Ce n'est pas moi qui suis bon, mais vous qui êtes dur‡."

* Pope, Epitaph on the Honourable Robert Digby.
† Letters. ‡ St.-Sim. vii. 49.

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Every one, if he chose, might hear it sometimes speak in a thoughtful boy, in a woman, and in a child; but when we do hear it on a great occasion, we experience an emotion that nothing else in the world can ever produce. We feel tears steal into our eyes, a cold shudder runs through our nerves; we are impressed in a way that we cannot describe, and that no one, perhaps, can conceive who has not heard it. "Veracity," exclaims a great contemporary, "true simplicity of heart, how valuable are these always! He that speaks what is really in him, will find men to listen, though under never such impediments *." The heart is always for prompt expression, for prompt action. It does not wait and deliberate; and this can be witnessed in the young, who follow their first thoughts. And how often would it be well if men in that respect would imitate them! "The heart of Venice," says the historian of its stones, "is shown only in her hastiest counsels; her worldly spirit recovers the ascendancy whenever she has time to calculate the probabilities of advantage." So it is with many men wearing long beards. Then they speak like Roebuck to Leanthe, and say, "O child! boys of your age are continually reading, and filling your heads with notions of love and honour; but when you come to my years, you'll understand better things." To whom a boy may reply, "And must I be a false, treacherous villain when I come to your years, Sir? Are falsehood and perjury essential to the perfect state of manhood?" When the others will only exclaim, "Pshaw! children always talk thus foolishly; you understand nothing, boy." And in fact there are many whom Saint-Simon's description of M. du Maine would fit as if it were made for them: "With a mind like that not of an angel, but of a demon, whom he resembled in malignity, in darkness, in perversity of soul, in disservices to all, in services to no one, in deeply laid projects, in pride the most haughty, in exquisite falsehood, in artifices without number, in dissimulations without measure, and in the power of seduction when he chose to seduce †."

Upon the whole, simplicity or truthfulness is a trait that belongs eminently to the first age; and the importance of study-

* Carlyle, Past and Present. † Tom. vi. 3.

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ing it appears from the fact that too often in after life it yields to the action of elements which agree not with its nature. The Roman children used to wear the 'bulla' for the reason, as Plutarch says, "that they should not wish to be men before their time." There was wisdom at all events, as far as it went, in the admonition.

But here another subject, closely allied to the last, another theme, by some perhaps thought fit only for the perambulators, must be glanced at before we close the chapter. We must notice in childhood not alone innocence and simplicity, but that which may bear the general name of goodness, for which the word in ancient languages was said to be derived from what is to be admired—*ἀγαθόν*, from *ἀγαστόν*, as Plato says*.

O virtue, virtue, ever and endless virtue! If any thing on earth could satisfy the human mind, it might be the goodness of early youth; and, by the way, perhaps, if one might venture to suggest it here among the flowers, a contemplation of it might be of great use in tempering some very grave men's notions of the Deity; for what must be the goodness of the Creator, who has imparted such features of it to boys and girls, and made children what they are! Finding them here seated under these boughs, we might say with truth, "Loquitur eorum voce virtus ipsa tecum †;" what seems to speak to you through them is goodness itself, which in persons of mature years will be found sometimes to give place to speakers of rather a different kind, though often in the world more thought of and admired. Only let John speak to you, and I defy you to conceive even a goodness different from what he reflects. What spoke to you also in both these boys, for of others we must not tell, was honour. Soft as they were, both were not the less what the Duc de Saint-Simon calls "de l'ancienne roche;" both were

> "E'en as just as e'er my conversation cop'd withal;
> Great men could not out-peer these twain."

With the eldest, whose years admitted of a fuller grasp of things, "good without noise, without pretension great," there never was but one question to be answered when a difficulty

* Cratylus. † Tuscul. ii.

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great or small arose. He did not ask, is a thing politic? indeed, I believe he did not know the word,—at least, no one ever heard him use it; is it respectable in the way of the world, is it prudent, is it customary for persons in my station? He asked only, is it just? Truly of him one might have said, "justissimus unus, et servantissimus æqui."

Cardinal Palæotus, addressing the scholars of the academy of Bologna, and taking for his text the words, "Bonitatem, disciplinam et scientiam doce me," declares that he refers all correction and improvement to themselves, content with reminding them that they are not alone scholars, but Christian scholars. If there were any thing to reform in their manners, he knows that they would not be offended at his pointing it out; but he does not even pretend to point out defects to them; they can themselves best judge; and to their ingenuous discretion he leaves all *.

With the grown world, whatever it may say or theoretically agree to, there is a thought always at the bottom which esteems but little childlike qualities. What is the value of this thought? We have the most intelligent on our side, when we decree it worthless. "In children," says an acute observer, "we see the wisdom of our Creator, imparting to them feelings and passions, and adapting them to their end. In them we can see clearly, how well adapted to their purpose are love, sympathy, hope, and fear †." "An excellent and fine nature," says the Père Boutauld, "is nothing else but the excellence and beauty of a noble soul communicated to the passions." "Perform well what is just," says our Lord, in Deuteronomy; and on this passage, Rodriguez even, though writing for recluses, observes, that the actions upon which all our good, and all our advancement and perfection depend, are no others than the common and ordinary actions we perform every day. Now, there are no keener judges to determine when these are well or ill performed than children. "O K—," said little John, the other day, to his brother, "when one asks you civilly to do a thing, you ought to do it readily."

* Palæot. De Bononiensis Ecclesiæ Administratione, Serm. ad Schol. 552.

† Lord Brougham, Nat. Theol.

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The admonition is an instance, to show how the daily little impressions of such young minds agree with this high theology. And then, again, what have you to desire in exchange for the qualities of youth? If my reader should be fresh from examining "the seven lamps," and relishing the doctrine of light and shade, he will not deem commonplace a theme like this, which is relieved by such broad contrasts. Yes, truly, there are dark masses before us, to throw out the gleams of the young in this respect. And these contrasts are greater than we can represent by words, though we had the pen of a Duc de Saint-Simon, or of Tacitus. Let us remember that fact. When we attempt to describe them, we are like landscape painters, with white lead for their highest light, and a visibly illumined surface of black for their deepest shadow, "set to run the gauntlet against nature, with the sun for her light, and vacuity for her gloom*." A French philosopher has proved by the photomètre that the contrasts of light and shade in a picture are merely delusive. In nature, the difference between shade and an object in the light varies from ten to twenty, while in a picture the difference is only from two to four. The intensity of light upon illumined clouds is many thousand or even million times greater than that upon a tree near us. It is difficult, he adds, to comprehend how the eye that looks at a picture can tolerate such an inexactitude †. But in presence of this scale of nature, which sets out from earth and touches heaven, what can an artist effect with his short scale, when his purest white measured by the photomètre is hardly eighty times brighter than ivory black? It is the same with our attempt to contrast the goodness of childhood and youth with the moral phenomena too often presented in later life. Let us use what language we will to represent the grace of the former, though we went, like a painter, "to the cataract for its iris, to the conflagration for its flames, to the sea for its intensest azure, to the sky for its clearest gold, a faithful and true representation is rigorously impossible." Let us proceed, however, with a few glances, in the way of negation, and observe what children and the young

* Modern Painters. † Cosmos, vi. Année, vol. x.

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in this respect are not. We may say then first, in general, that goodness is not poison to their stomachs. One of the most shameful and hideous deformities which can belong to us by the fault of nature, says the Père Boutauld, "is to have the heart narrow. Those who are so constituted, though the world may pay them lip homage, are very contemptible. Where the heart is little the rest is the same, let fortune do what it may." What a lesson might such persons receive from children! For a child, or youth, has a great heart; he is never Dives. You have never to feel your ground like a blind man, before accosting him; whether it be thoughts or bread, he will share all he has with the first comer. This eldest lad, for instance, used to say, he often wished that his inheritance by primogeniture could have been made over to his brother. If an occasion had presented itself, he would infallibly have acted like the good Duke de Coislin, when, after a battle, one of the Rhingraves falling to him as prisoner, he wished to give him his bed; and as the other would not be outdone in kindness, lo and behold! they both had to sleep on the floor, with the bed between them *. To borrow language from the Père de Neuville, children and the young are not great in the intrigues of ambition, in the windings of self-interest, in the perfidies of policy, in the malignities of hatred, in the wanderings of voluptuousness; not great in the plan of those passions from which spring cruel revolutions, tragic catastrophes, fearful disorders which degrade man and overthrow empires; but they are great in the constant practice of truth, of equity, of charity, of shame, of modesty, of disinterestedness, of probity; they are great in the order of virtues which form the bond of society, the charm of friendship, the union of families, the peace of the world; they are not great in the plan of a mind and heart limited to the fugitive prosperities of this rapid instant which we call human life; not great in the order of reason, obscured and narrowed by cupidity, but they are great in the plan of a mind and heart taught to have no fears and hopes, but such as are for eternity; they are great, that is to say, in the order of reason, enlightened

* Saint-Simon, Mém. tom. iv. 11.

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and ennobled by faith, or to express it in the highest, without losing aught of natural beauty and natural grace, "they are great in the order of religion."

Thus, again, can we derive solid and most important instruction from a visit to the Children's Bower; for where their voices are silenced, their verdicts set aside, their ways and maxims scouted, it becomes, as far as goodness is concerned, a very sorry world, however it may swell and glitter with all the symptoms of material prosperity, and the trickery of a deceptive grandeur. Then, as a London driver once said to myself, "People learn to be selfish from their cradles." Then, as Overbury says, "for any skill in geometry I dare not commend them: for they can never find out the dimensions of their own conscience; though they have many bottoms, it seemeth this is always bottomless." Then when men boast with those, whom Cesar Carta calls the Liberalastri, of their freedom, they are only verifying the words of St. Augustin, that none are free but those who are called to liberty by truth,—"Neque enim habent congruum libertati nisi quod habent congruum veritati." Many of us have heard an eloquent voice declaring what great things might be expected, if we were only to have over us as governors and administrators heroic men of great and noble intelligences, of single and innocent hearts; how such an election would be the true reform, the only reform that can do us good. Well, granting for a moment, that the result would verify these magnificent predictions, which is granting, indeed, a great deal; get men who will retain the disposition of the child, and add to it the experience and ability of a man, and all is done; you will at last have found what you have been so long in quest of. Who that thinks a little about what is found elsewhere, can sufficiently admire the spirit of the Children's Bower, the genius of the place if you will? Children and "tender juveniles" can't draw contrasts from whatever they may see in their own favour, nor would they if they could; but tough seniors who look on may be permitted to analyze a little the moral atmosphere which is breathed at a distance from them. Lest we should run into vague accusations, let us only take the instance of the effect of the child's atmosphere in enlightening and directing the intelligence, and controlling by the instinct of

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goodness the acts which follow from the exercise of reason in application to the conduct, when a contrary air is breathed,—when among the faculties of the mind the understanding, as Charles Lamb says, "is made to hold a most tyrannical pre-eminence; when all is frozen and made rigid with intellect, when a man judges of others as if he were himself a being of pure intellect, with all knowledge but no sympathy." Kant, we are told, sets out from Pascal's principle, that reason is the whole of man. The philosophy of the bower tends to make us think it rather a small part of him; at all events, it teaches that goodness with the persuasive candour of a pure enthusiasm has reasons for what it does, which reason alone can never find; and, indeed, daily experience proves, that when the heart, as Sterne says, "flies out before the understanding, it saves the judgment a world of pains," sometimes, too, of lost pains. For, to take an example, read the Life of Philip the Second, and observe how the acute king can reconcile all his cruelties with the dictates of his judgment, how he can give a reason for all his actions, how he can satisfy his own mind with respect to every thing he does. But, mark me. Let all be related as it happened, and you will find that children and women, and the just clear-hearted man, can not be so satisfied, though the mere logician must be. The light emanating from goodness will cause them, on the contrary, to dislike many of these actions, many of these thoughts, reasons, and supposed justifications. How, asks a great author, "can a man without clear vision in his heart first of all have any clear vision in the head? Impossible." Reason left without goodness seems powerless to answer when the king defends the policy and wisdom of his government. He shows how the magistrate beareth not the sword in vain; how it is the leaders of rebellion that merit punishment; how he is pained to the bottom of his soul when obliged to shed blood for the safety of the public; how he has only consulted the repose of the provinces, and the defence of the Catholic faith. "If I had respected justice less," he says, "I should have dispatched the whole business in a single day. No one acquainted with the state of affairs will find reason to censure my severity, nor would I do otherwise than I have done, though I should risk the sovereignty of the Netherlands. No, though the world

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should fall in ruins around me, the whole world should see that the king has proceeded with justice." In the affair of the trial of Egmont and Horn, the king submitted the question about referring the trial to the Toison d'Or, "to men of authority and learning, who gave it a full examination." "If," said Philip, "the offence had been against the king, it would have been easy to pardon it, but against the faith it was impossible. He could have wished that measures like those to which he had been forced had not been necessary in his reign, but no man has a right to shrink from his duty." Thus a man of powerful understanding, and probably of just intentions, had wisdom of head, but not that true wisdom, the wisdom of the young, which comes from the heart; that instructive reason, as a great writer calls it, to attempt to follow which by the help of syllogism, would be as vain as if a man with the gout in both feet were to try to follow a chamois-hunter by the help of crutches. He had the discursive faculty, but not the intuitive sense of right and wrong,—reason, in the Johnsonian sense, or the power of deducing one proposition from another, or proceeding from premises to consequences; but not that certain divination, presage, and parturient vaticination in the mind, as Cudworth calls it, "of some higher good and perfection than either power or knowledge;" something better, as Aristotle says, "than reason and knowledge, which is the principle and original of it." So what is justice in the palace of Madrid, is iniquity in the Children's Bower; what is expedient, wise, and necessary to the king, is madness, folly, crime, and villainous treachery to the child. And do you think it would not have been better for the monarch of Spain to have followed the youth's heart than his own judgment? Give me the beardless statesman as far as that goes. The king will have to be judged on the very principles which the child can understand. There are not two orders of moral truths, one for common and the other for extraordinary people. "There is no dictature," says Villemain, "for a man or for a nation, whether of genius or of number, or of a providential mission, or whatever other name you may give it," which gives a right, as I would finish the sentence, to act differently from what the boy feels to be just.

But look in what direction you will, and you can find nothing

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to oppose to this goodness of the bower. The Père de Neuville knew well what was life at a distance from it in the world, when he summed up the different humours which govern mankind. "There," he says, "you meet with the sombre and abstracted humour, always retired within itself, plunged in a profound and sterile revery, seeming to see nothing and to hear nothing; by its indifference to every thing about it displeasing to all; there you observe the savage and melancholy humour, which flies human society, pleased with having no friendships, and in troubling those of others; there you have the passionate humour, which can do nothing without violence; the critical humour, which makes its honour consist in esteeming nothing; the jealous humour, which loves in an inverse ratio to the titles to love; the suspicious humour, which condemns before examination, and which examines only to condemn more severely; which confides in no one, and believes in no virtue; there you meet with the reserved and mystic humour, which ignores that tenderness and sweet simplicity that form the charm of friendship; which loves concealment, insinuates rather than affirms; speaks only by halves; reveals only a part, in order to conceal more securely the rest under the veil of this pretended confidence; there is witnessed the envious and inquisitive humour, which follows with an attentive eye every step you take, seeking to discover every thing; the restless and hostile humour, that seeks to snap all bonds of society and friendship, detested because they are known, humoured because they are feared; the humour of contradiction, which loves to walk alone, with ideas that are its own, merely because they belong to no one else, that would condemn their own sentiments if others adopted them; imperious humour, which demands timid respect; humour of delicate susceptibility, which is wounded at the least inattention, the least trifle; irritable, implacable, alive to what wounds themselves, careless of what wounds others; who must be pardoned for every thing, and who will pardon nothing; there is found the capricious humour, which causes them to be many men in one man, which can neither be for you nor against you; and, in fine, the angry humour, which is nourished by the anger that it provokes, and by the anger that it receives." It is in the midst of all

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these dispositions that children and young people live; and how much might not be reformed by only studying the contrast presented by their character, and transferring their way of thinking and of acting to the life of mature manhood!

"Yes, if the spirit gazing through
The vista of the past, can view
One deed to heaven and virtue true;
If through the wreck of wasted powers,
Of garlands wreathed from folly's bowers,
Of idle aims and misspent hours,
The eye can note one sacred spot,
By pride and self profaned not;
A green place in the waste of thought—
Where deed or word hath rendered less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And gratitude looks forth to bless
The simple burst of tenderest feeling
From sad hearts worn by evil dealing,
For blessing on the hand of healing;—
Better than Glory's pomp will be
That green and blessed spot to me—
A palm-shade in Eternity*!"

What is that green place, that blessed spot, where, if ever goodness and justice should be forced to leave our earth, their last footsteps would be traced? It is the very nook in which they are now seated—the Children's Bower. Ought we not then, as Plato says, "like huntsmen, closely surrounding a thicket, to take great care that goodness does not somehow or other escape, and vanish from our sight?" For it is certain that it is somewhere here. Look earnestly, then, or rather pass in at once, and no one need be called to point it out to you.

* Whittier.

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CHAPTER IV.

HY should they call this sweet pretty place any one's Folly? Inquisitive giant! What does it matter? Here we are to enjoy it with the singing birds, and perhaps with Folly herself, if some will so designate the spirit that has led us here. What delicious shade under the branches, and how this steep hill-side is fragrant with the violets, which smell so much sweeter in consequence of the heat! What a number of smiling people, too, pass on to the tower that has given the whole wood its name! After helping this fair damsel down the bank, which proves too steep for her, I, for one, sit down

"—— patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi."

Do you, master Jack, scamper where you will, and make the woods resound with praises of what you best love. But stay; a thought strikes me, or, rather, without knowing much of Horace Walpole and of his talk about "le sieur Orphée," what some one else proposes comes into my head. As we are actually in the Folly, and with Folly, under the green leaves, let us invite the friendly trees to dance with us, and never mind the snarler who may abuse me for filling up my page with extracts, though till this moment I never cited any author whose thought was not mine before I heard him express it better than I could do myself; so let us use the very words as well as the thought, so new to me, of our sweet poet Mackay, and say to them—

"If you could dance when Orpheus piped,
Ye oaks, and elms, and beeches,
Try, when a man of modern time
Your courtesy beseeches.

"Come, Father Oak, so old and staid,
But vigorous and hearty,
Shake off the soberness of years,
And join the merry party.

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'Tis not becoming? Harmless mirth
Takes no account of ages,—
So, Monarch of the Woods, unbend,
And frolic with your pages!

"And thou, superbest matron Beech,
In all thy bloom of beauty,
Relax! and learn that, now and then,
Enjoyment is a duty.
And Lady Lime, the honey sweet,
With music in thy tresses,
Step out,—the wild winds pipe the tune,
And every moment presses.

"Ye damsel Birches, slim and fair,
And capersome with fun,
Who've just come home from boarding-school,
And love to dance and run,
I know you're ready: come away,
With silver-braided kirtles,
And taper limbs, and flowing hair,
And breath as sweet as myrtles.

"Ye Firs and Larches, rough as lads
Let loose from School or College;
Ye Poplars, stiff as men on 'Change,
Forget your cram of knowledge.
You're no such beauties of yourselves,
But every tree an aid is,—
And you'll improve in elegance,
By contact with the ladies.

"And you, like melancholy maids
Who sigh on lonely pillows,
Or widows, ere they've cast their weeds,—
Ye fond, romantic Willows,
Come from your looking-glass, the stream,
And cease to play at Sorrow,
And taste a little Joy to-day,
To think about to-morrow.

"And thou, dear Hawthorn,—sweetest sweet,
The beautiful, the tender,
Bright with the fondling of the sun,
And prankt in bridal splendour,—

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Come with thy sisters, full of bloom,
And all thy bridemaids merry,—
Acacia, Chesnut, Lilac fair,
The Apple, and the Cherry.

"Strike up the music! Lo! it sounds!
The expectant woodlands listen;
They wave their branches to the sky,
And all their dew-drops glisten.
There comes a rustling from the heights,
A buzzing from the hollow,
They move, the ancient Oaks and Elms,
And all the juniors follow.

"They move, they start, they thrill, they dance,
They shake their boughs with pleasure,
And flutter all their gay green leaves,
Obedient to the measure.
They choose their partners: Oak and Beech
Pair off, a stately couple;
And Larch to Willow makes his bow,
Th' unbending to the supple.

"The Hawthorn, charm of every eye,
In Beauty's ranks a leader,
Has choice of many for her hand,
But gives it to the Cedar.
She loves the wisdom of his looks,
And name renown'd in story:
And he, th' effulgence of her eyes,
And fragrance of her glory.

"The Elms and Lindens choose their mates,
And e'en the sturdy Holly;
And all the Brambles and the Ferns
Think standing still is folly,
And foot it briskly on the sward,
As wild as lads and lasses,—
But make sad havoc, as they twirl,
With all the flowers and grasses."

"Good master stranger," as Elia says, "you look wise. Pray correct that error." But come, children, since you have so long danced, and I see you are tired, let us sit down on the soft

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moss. Propose a subject. I guess from your truant glances what it will be without being a prophet.

> "Dicite; quandoquidem in molli consedimus herba
> Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos."

Already we have found that to a person who observes and reflects, there are lessons of some interest furnished by this sequestered academy where children and birds are congregated; and, in truth, I think that any one of you little mad boys and girls, even when you are in your quips and your quiddities, might shame whole schools of sages.

> "———————— for letil hevynesse
> Is right i-nough for moche folk, I gesse.
> Such talkyng is nought worth a boterflye,
> For therinne is noor disport ne game."

Hitherto we have been occupied with very serious matters without giving our fancy the least airing.

> "But what are these grave thoughts to thee?
> Out, out! into the open air!
> Thy only dream is liberty,
> Thou carest little how or where.
> I see thee eager at thy play,
> Now shouting to the apples on the tree,
> With cheek as round and red as they;
> And now among the yellow stalks,
> Among the flowering shrubs and plants,
> As restless as the bee*."

"Come on, May, and let's have a bit of fun before dinner," our little John used to cry out to his sister. "Oh, je vous prie de rier," he would say to the governess, "rier, ma'moselle, ça me fait tant de bien." His "May" tells me he would go into fits of laughter when his brother used to sing at tea. The truth is, in the field, in the wood, every where he was one of those

> "Who in his very childhood did appear
> Sublime from present purity and joy."

Children have at command what the Père Boutauld praises,

* Longfellow.

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"all the charms which accompany laughing and playing, and the familiarity of a conversation between hearts, when heart speaks to heart*." But all that any one could say would not be adequate to express the spirit of joy that animates them. Look again, I say, at little John. I never saw a boy more merry at his play.

"———————— But who could paint
The young and shadowless spirit? who could chain
The sparkling gladness of a heart that lives,
Like a glad fountain, in the eye of light,
With an unbreathing pencil? Nature's gift
Has nothing that is like it. Sun and stream
And the new leaves of June, and the young lark
That flies away into the depths of heaven,
Lost in his own wild music, and the breath
Of spring-time, and the summer eve, and noon
In the cool autumn, are like fingers swept
Over sweet-toned affections,—but the joy
That enters to the spirit of a child
Is deep as his young heart:——
Beautiful, beautiful childhood! with a joy
That like a robe is palpable, and flung
Out by your every motion! delicate bud
Of the immortal flower that will unfold
And come to its maturity in heaven†!"

We have to observe therefore in this chapter the joyousness of children; to watch them at their play, and to remark their estimate of the innocence and importance of pleasure in its time. I wish that we may prove a fitting audience.

"Fresh gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart, return!
Alas! the little joy to man allowed,
Fades like the lustre of an evening cloud;
Or like the beauty in a flower enstalled,
Whose season was and cannot be recalled."

With children at least, I suppose, one can use the word pleasure, and speak of the thing itself too without, it may be hoped,

* Conseilles de la Sagesse. † Willis.

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causing any great scandal elsewhere. We can praise in them what it must be confessed might be ambiguous in their elders; for though in nine cases out of ten grown-up people might in this respect resemble them, they alone, as the world goes, seem to possess the faculty of enjoying the aroma of all things without being obliged to meddle with the secret properties that cunning can elicit out of them; they have nothing to do, whatever grave people may detect, with the essential oil, as it were, which can be extracted from each pleasure, with its dregs or with its poison. Moreover, the fact is, that their mirth, if we would speak for once like learned people etymologically, is more entertaining than diverting; for it does not turn them, even when they play the part of Flibbertigibbets, aside from what they have to discharge, but they can unite it with every little duty of their own for the benefit of themselves and others. How early, at what unconscionable, ungentlemanly hours in the morning, do these juveniles begin to whistle! Darkness, cold, and wet prevent not a day in London from being ushered in by their merry tunes under your window, though, poor things, they are not exactly hastening to a bower of pleasure, heaven knows, but to the hard task of their respective labours.

While our talk then is of children, we may venture to commend the genius of joy, and even expect that where it reigns there are wise old people who will be gladly lookers-on, which need not surprise us, for on the whole, with a little experience of the voyage of life,

> "———————— none, I trust,
> Repines at these delights; they are free and harmless.
> After distress at sea, the dangers o'er,
> Safety and welcomes better taste ashore."

In the first place, then, we should notice the fact that joy is the true spirit of this bower; for though it will be generally admitted, the observing it is itself so agreeable a thing, that in order to relish this a moment we may be allowed to suppose that others require to have it pointed out to them.

> "So from the arbour roof down swells an air
> Odorous and enlivening; making all

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To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call
For mirth."

This taste begins early; it is, perhaps, our very first aspiration. "Some," says an old writer, "admiring what motives to mirth infants meet with in their silent and solitary smiles, have resolved that then they converse with angels, as indeed such cannot find any fitter companions." But the same spirit grows up with them, and continues with them long, to the delight of many who will say with the good wife that admires her sprightly apprentice, "Sweetheart, i'faith, I'll have Ralph come and do some of his gambols. Now, good youth, do a turn o' th' toe; he'll ride the wild mare, gentlemen, 'twould do your hearts good to see him." "A giovine cuor," say the Italians, "tutto è giuoco." Childhood and youth have "an eye to see life's sunniest side, and a heart to take their chances all as God sends *." They have an eye even to discover that nature, which has made levity as well as gravity, loves what is comic; as in fact she does seem inclined now and then to play a bit of farce in her own person. "By the breaking of a board over our heads," says Pepys, "we had a great deal of dust fall into the ladies' necks and the men's hair, which made good sporte." This is young people's way of looking at things. With them, as with Puck, 'tis sport to see themselves fall down, and they can say—

"For these things do best please me
That befall preposterously."

As Lamb humorously says, they are "proof against weather, ingratitude, meat underdone, every weapon of fate." But look at these present. No one ever saw this namesake of the giant-killer slay any thing; he would not kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; but when his brother used to catch frogs and put them on board a toy ship, and launch them out on a pond at the bottom of the garden, he used to watch them with a keen relish, and fall into fits of laughter as they jumped overboard. Mirth and youth are plotters. Certainly it was a fine plot to send a ship forth with such a crew.

"Stultus labor est ineptiarum,"

* Whittier.

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says Martial; but it is not so foolish if it be a child that's at work in the bower or in the hall. Childhood and youth have a heart as light as a feather for all its greatness, and with their themes one can "o'ermount the lark." In them the least thing can awake "the pert and nimble spirit of mirth." Like fairies they love to dance their ringlets to the whistling wind,—

"Over hill, over dale,
Through bush, through brier,
Over park, over pale,
Through flood, through fire."

Little John's idea of pleasure was going out all together for a very long walk, coming home covered with mud or snow, and rushing into his mother's room with sparkling eyes to exhibit himself before her in that pickle, and to say how many miles they had been, which sometimes amounted to six, ten, or even twelve. Then next morning he would exclaim, "What a happy day yesterday was! I never spent such a one in all my life." In fact, a merrier hour is never wasted than when in such company.

"Lætitia ludisque viæ plausuque fremebant."

With them at least may poor Folly, honest Folly, jocundary Folly, stay awhile and be unblamed. The fancy of children does wonders for them. "A gentleman," says Fuller, "having led a company of them beyond their usual journey, they began to be weary, and jointly cried to him to carry them; he told them they were too many for him to carry them, but that he would provide horses for them to ride on. Then cutting little wands out of the hedge as nags for them, and a great stake as a gelding for himself, thus mounted, fancy put mettle into their legs, and they came cheerfully home." A few chairs and plenty of twine sufficed with Tom when little, and with John after him, to impart all the pleasure of a drive with young Telemachus to the house of Menelaus. Then you might have described each in old Homer's words—

Ἐς δίφρον τ' ἀνέβαινε, καὶ ἡνία λάζετο χερσί·
Μάστιξεν δ' ἐλάαν· τὼ δ' οὐκ ἄκοντε πετέσθην
Ἐς πεδίον——.

Yes, these horses would seem to fly leaving Pylos, and through

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the corn-bearing plains. What a rate have they gone on at, curveting and frisking it away! This is something better for their drivers than τυπτω-ing it upstairs. For the moment you might think you heard them vowing to lock up their study door and throw the key of it ninety feet below the surface of the earth into some draw-well; but can you wonder at it, seeing how they manage those mettlesome tits, madcap drivers as they are, flying like lightning, scarcely touching the ground for miles, while all the time not stirring from the dining-room? for the real fact is, a boy can be bounded in a nut-shell, and count himself a king of infinite space. As far as amusements and their kind of poetry are concerned, children have no difficulties. Each can say with Puck,

> "Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
> A hog, a headless bear, sometimes a fire,
> And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
> Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn."

Such was our John in those happy days when "the fairy land would buy not the child of me." Then is it question of a grand dramatic or a conjurer's show to please their elders, and a little too themselves? They are all like the rustic players in Midsummer Night's Dream, who, to the objection "You never can bring in a wall," reply, "Some one or other must present wall; and let him have some plaster or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall." Bless you! children are lords of the universe. "I'll be sworn, gentlemen," says the good wife, speaking of their 'prentice, "my husband tells you true. He will act you sometimes at our house that all the neighbours cry out on him; he will fetch you up a couraging part so in the garret, that we are all as feared, I warrant you, that we quake again. We'll fear our children with him. If they be never so unruly, do but cry Ralph comes! Ralph comes! and they'll be as quiet as lambs. Hold up thy head, Ralph; show the gentleman what thou canst do; speak a huffing part." There you have our Tom's portrait. Then again observe that their amusements are little costly. We see that they know how to enjoy themselves, an art of which their elders seem often wholly ignorant. They have "summer slumbers on the grass, and work like play,

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and innocent idleness, and Elysian exemptions, and life itself a holiday." A walk, a swim, a row in a boat, a reclining on a bank without their coats, or, at the most, "seeing with their eyes," as Homer would say, a circus suffice to enchant them. In fact, you must go to heroic poetry to express little John's delight at seeing a circus or the marionettes. Without the least exaggeration one might have expected to hear him say in the style of Homeric youth, *σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντα*. Far from him or from his brother was the least taint of that morose severity, or that exotic softness, which will scowl or shrink at the coarseness of vulgar felicity, like Tiberius disdaining the habits of Augustus, who thought it wise and agreeable "misceri voluptatibus vulgi*;" or like a shrub transplanted to northern nurseries from the tropical regions. Rollin remarks the taste of the young for simple things. "No costly dishes of meat," he says, "are necessary to nourish them; nor great diversions to amuse them. The temper of the mind," he says, "is spoiled as the taste by the desire of lively and extraordinary pleasures. And as the use of ragouts causes healthy food to become insipid, so great excitements of mind lead to tedium and disgust in regard to the ordinary diversions of youth." "In childhood," says Johnson, "the main of life is composed of small incidents and petty occurrences; of wishes for objects not remote, and grief for disappointments of no fatal consequence; of insect vexations which sting us and fly away; impertinencies which buzz awhile about us, and are heard no more; of meteorous pleasures which dance before us and are dissipated." Such are the grave Doctor's observations. But the inference shows how the subject would grow upon our hand if we were to let it; for it conveys an important political lesson, though elder people in general of course will not learn it; since from this attribute of youthful and childlike joys, it is clear we have found out, without going to Plato's Republic, the real secret of avoiding war, "whence especially arise mischiefs to cities, both privately and publicly." However, as we must observe limits, and as a state will not be composed only of young people or of those who

* Tacitus, Ann. i.

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adopt their views, we must let that advantage pass, and return to watch the children themselves.

Imitation, no doubt, enters largely into their notions of amusement, and it is a sad thing when circumstances force upon them evil models, or when they are enticed to enter into the political or social agitations of the day, as when Cæsar and Pompey were the watchwords of contending parties, and the children in the streets divided themselves into Cæsarians and Pompeians. In Christian nations, the young mind is oftener attracted by the beautiful ceremonies which they witness in connexion with religion; as when those boys of Alexandria, playing together on the sea-shore upon a festival, could hit upon nothing better than to imitate what they had seen in the church. The Bishop Alexander, who happened to observe them, was at first, naturally enough perhaps, rather displeased; but having them interrogated, he was so edified by their innocent answers, that, having thought well upon it, he declared valid the baptism they had conferred with a pure intention upon some heathen boys, and commended their parents for having brought them up so well.

But every little thing gives childhood joy. They who are not condemned by parental or national error to "sigh away Sundays," take great delight in having something gay to put on for that day. "Isn't it spicy for Sundays?" they ask, or if bashful like little John, you will only read in their happy face, while glancing at their new frock, that they are saying to themselves, "Do not I look freshly, and like a youth of the trim?" This taste for beauty or smartness in apparel is so pure in youth, that children even associate it with piety; and when so developed, a man, methinks, must be very stoical if he can observe it without deep emotion. René-Marie-Albert de Jouenne d'Esgrigny, nephew of one of the best friends of our Thomas, dying in his sixteenth year, on the morning when he was to receive our Lord, desired his poor couch to be arranged, and that he should be washed and neatly combed, evincing thus by his care for external appearance the purity of his heart. As for pleasures of the palate, the boy in general cares not for them. He does not think about his stomach; but for all that, he has

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his little secret joy in paying an occasional visit to some one he knows, like that "most sweet Spaniard, the comfit-maker of Toledo, who can teach sugar to slip down your throat a million of ways." Not too childish, either, is the joy in general that we have to observe, as Goldsmith's well-known lines bear witness:

> "Dear lovely bowers of love and ease,
> Seats of their youth, where every sport could please;
> How often have they loiter'd o'er thy green,
> While humble happiness endear'd each scene!
> And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
> And sleights of art, and feats of strength went round;
> And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
> Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd."

The amusement of these young people in the bower continues, as in the time of the Pheacians, to be trials of agility and strength, though on a small scale, trials with their feet, and with their hands and arms,—the foot-race, and the playful combat, and the quoit. Alas! it seems but yesterday that Tom played with me at the latter game, and seemed to take pleasure in my victory over him! Wordsworth has well described their winter's loved amusement:

> "—— All shod with steel
> They hissed along the polished ice in games
> Confederates.
> So thro' the darkness and the cold they flew,
> And not a voice was idle; with the din
> Smitten, the precipices ring aloud;
> The leafless trees, and every icy crag
> Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
> Into the tumult sent an alien sound
> Of melancholy not unnoticed."

Children's pleasures and those of youth are, as far as they go, what the Père Boutauld designates as the pleasures of Solomon, so long as he was the true Solomon; and these he calls marks of the excellence of our soul, and of its advantages over material and mortal organizations. Like him, they love music, they like buildings, they like histories, they like cultivating the ground, they like gardening and planting, they doat on horses; and, adds this grave observer, "it is one of the most august signs of the

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supreme dignity of man, that the proudest animals are his voluntary slaves, and ready to draw his chariots,—they like to drive and to ride. Children thus accomplish the precept, 'Avocare et lude, et age conceptiones tuas, sed non in delictis*.'"

To witness this doating on horses, we need not look to Solomon as long as these three boys are here in the bower. And then what joy had the eldest in the chace! which Plato was so far from vilifying, that he thought it should be recommended to youth by legislators †. But from his diary, in which he talks of so many glorious mornings and dark nights, one may gather that what he loved in it, unconsciously, was its poetry;—he loved it for the freshness of the dawn, "ere the hot sun had counted his dewy rosary on the eglantine;" he loved it for the morning sky,

Ἦμος ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς,

and truly, as Ruskin says of a young knight, "it was a beautiful thing to see him riding out in morning sunshine, and in faithful hope;"

"His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his hunter trode;
From underneath his casket flowed
His coal-black curls, as on he rode."

He loved it for the late ride home, when all the ways were obscured; he loved it for the courage of the horse, and the sagacity of the dogs, and the occasion to prove himself *ἱπποδαμοιόν*. I found this entry in his poor boyish diary: "Friday, 14 March, 1854. I got my first brush after two hours and ten minutes' run. I swam the river Eden, and my old mare, Peggy, cleared a brook fifteen feet broad." He often too sought to save the hunted animal, for cruelty he detested; though the excitement of the whole thing carried him away with it. His hunting led to a knowledge of the country, and might have reminded one of what Xenophon as well as Plato said of the utility of the sport, and of what Nisus and Euryalus predicated of themselves:—

"Vidimus obscuris primam sub vallibus urbem
Venatu assiduo, et totum cognovimus amnem."

* Eccles. 32. † Leg. vii.

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He had his maps of the county, and he knew every farm, and moor, and wood, and dell, and dingle, for miles around. It was his passion to bring the simplicity of such haunts within doors, and

> "With this field dew consecrate
> Every several chamber bless,
> Through his own home with sweet peace;"

as if, like Shakspeare, he thought there was a sacredness and peace in the dew of the fields. But in these allusions to the chace, we should be, only for reasons already alleged, almost passing beyond the bounds allowed to denizens of the bower. The little journals of his still earlier youth are, it must be owned, more to the point, and equally redolent of joy, as when we find such notices as these: "This day we had a splendid walk with Mr. S., papa, Mr. P., and K.;" and again, as if an expectation, though frustrated, had been pleasure, "hoped to have had a ride to-day with K., but was not permitted." In those days, to express great joy, it was enough to recall the rambles on horseback across the sunny scrubs within the forest of St. Germain, or the little saunter on the banks of the Seine or of the Thames,

> "Where dancing sunbeams on the waters play'd,
> And verdant alders form'd a quivering shade;"

it was enough to recount what Pepys, in his Diary, talks of, "pulling off his stockings, and paddling about in the river." Being at Sherborne in the winter season, I found one day an ancient friend of my lord talking to our host with great gravity about the alarming mental condition of the young guest, which he was inclined to consider very serious, for the reason that he had just let out to him his intention of having a swim across the lake. But, in general, what seemed to make Tom thoroughly happy, was the having an occasion to employ his fiery activity, and, as it were, his "tours de page," for some good purpose that he knew would please those whom he respected. A learned French ecclesiastic, who was employed in a vast work respecting the saints of the diocese of Beauvais, having written to inquire whether any local traditions remained on the coast of Kent respecting the preaching of Eustache de Flaix in the thirteenth century, and particularly whether any such existed at a hamlet

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near Wye, where that holy man had blessed a well, Tom volunteered to make the inquiry. He started alone on a velocipede, and after a course of nearly twenty miles, by dint of perseverance, for the few cottages were hardly known even by the peasants at a few miles distant, he discovered the curious fact of there being such a well within the enclosure of a farm-house, called the Holy Well, and of which the water was still in great request throughout the neighbourhood, as being invested with miraculous powers to cure diseases. He could not have travelled much less than forty miles that day, when he came home triumphant with the success of his innocent expedition. In general, holidays spent in boating, in a childish way, or in boyish rambles, all ministered to the unconscious taste for poetry and the picturesque of these young people.

Xerxes proposed a reward for him who should invent a new pleasure. Children would soon see the end of their pocket-money if they made such an offer, for each pleasure is new to them. But mark what a charm is shed over the pleasures still enjoyed in later life, when they are first granted to the young. What innocent delight do they derive from going smartly dressed, like the brothers of Nausicaa to the dance, *νεόπλυτα εἵματ' ἔχοντες*! What pleasure have they from the dance itself, and from the music! How they will afterwards "jig off a tune at the tongue's end, and canary to it with their feet!" though of course you cannot hear words issue audibly from their lips to praise that pastime, as where De Quincey says, "Of all the scenes which this world offers, none is to me so profoundly interesting, none (I say it deliberately) so affecting as the spectacle of young men and women floating through the mazes of a dance,—the very grandest form of passionate sadness, though sadness is not the word for it, since it is elevating, which can belong to any spectacle whatsoever,—showing, as it were, the hours of golden youth, and the revolution of ages hurrying after ages, one generation treading upon the flying footsteps of another, and so capable of exciting and sustaining the very grandest emotions of a grand and aspiring melancholy to which the human spirit is open *." In general, music may be said to enchant the young. It is not

* Autob. i. 206.

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merely, as old Burton says, common boys and 'prentices that, "when a new song is published with us, go singing that new tune still in the streets." It is also their little grandee friends, and sometimes playmates of the bower who do so. It is remarkable how the tunes and the words of our most popular English compositions, such as our young men and women sing, are intensely, almost ludicrously, for all their pathos, childish. To learn them seems as natural as to learn to speak; and in fact, Gerson remarks, that music is as characteristic of man as language. How little John doated on them! No hearing, no feeling, but the street song, "and admiring the nothing of it." With what precision and grace he would beat time, smiling when his brother sung or played it!

> "Ambo florentes ætatibus, Arcades ambo,
> Et cantare pares, et respondere parati."

To see and hear either of them, was to find an instance of what Gerson commends in his poem in praise of music:

> "Per medias hyemes, per soles carmine fisus,
> Ibo spe patiens, lætus, alacris, ovans,
> Nam fugiunt tristes cantu per inania curæ *."

John would open the piano, and persuade his sisters to play every air he liked; and then, if any one disturbed him, he seemed pained to the utmost. His ear was so delicate, that in reading his lesson during their practice, he used to pronounce the words in time with the music. A day or two before he was taken ill, he danced to and fro on the balcony, as if unable to contain the joy with which he heard them playing the overture of William Tell, his favourite air, and every now and then he would run into the room, exclaiming, "Oh, how lovely! Do play it again,—only once more!"—unconsciously prophetic words, alas! which they understood not. It was the last time he heard it; at least here. Yes, for who knows? His elder brother, too, passionately loved music. He knew to play, to sing, and πολλὰ ἄλλα βροτῶν θελκτήρια. He cultivated music in all its branches; he inspired others with the love of it; he

* De Laude Musicæ, Tract. iii. de Canticis.

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animated many poor struggling wanderers in that walk by his noble liberality. He was the delight of every social meeting, as Demodachus was to the Pheacians.

——— τῷ γάρ ῥα θεὸς πέρι δῶκεν ἀοιδήν
Τερπνήν, ὅππη θυμὸς ἐποτρύνῃσιν ἀείδειν.

Alas! what remains now but to complete the Homeric picture, only representing the consequences of a different cause, which verify the remarks of Plato, that of some departed the sight of a lyre can remind us? There is one now who, if he hears such songs, will sit with his face covered, ashamed at being seen, ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυα λείβων. There is one that, when he hears the Norma or the Addio Teresa by Rosini, the gravest or the lightest strain, the Fine Old English Gentleman, or the Gay Troubadour, will sit apart and mourn βαρὺ στενάχοντος. Let the silver cornet be hung upon the peg; let the music-book be closed; let the singer cease; such sweet harmony sounds not to all alike.

Οὐ γάρ πως πάντεσσι χαριζόμενος τάδ' ἀείδει.

But in vain does one try to banish such recollections; if the streets are silent, even natural sounds bring them back.

"I seem thro' consecrated walks to rove,
I hear soft music die along the grove."

While yet mere children, these young people have joys, if possible, more intellectual still. John delighted in painting, and he would form the most innocent landscapes representing cottages, and woods, and stiles, and gates. He used to ask his father how gets on his new picture; he could tell at a glance what the first dash of colour signified; he used to watch the progress of each work. Then he delighted no less in poetry. He would listen for ever to any one who recited the Lay of the Last Minstrel, or Marmion.

"While yet a child, and long before his time
Had he perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
Great objects on his mind, with portraiture

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And calm, so distinct, that on his mind
They lay like substances, and almost seemed
To haunt his bodily sense*."

The Père Bonifacius speaks of a boy of twelve years, who, without any regular instruction, seemed to have taught himself the humanities. He spoke with eloquence on every subject, whether it was the beauty of gardens, the charms of a lovely maiden, the beauty of a great city, the duties of the magistracy, the temples, and private houses; all were described by him with inimitable grace. He tells us that he knew another boy so quick and profound a reasoner and theologian, that when he argued with any one it was like an eagle contending with a tortoise. He knew a third, still younger, who composed a tragedy worthy of the ancients. When he spoke on a religious theme, you might see many grave men moved to tears. Evelyn too, in his Diary, describes his hearing a boy of eight or nine years pronounce an oration with so much grace, that he says he was never better pleased to hear Italian so intelligently spoken; and Angelus Politian, writing to Picus of Mirandula, mentions another instance, saying, "I wish you had been with us to-day, at the dinner given by Paul Ursini, to have seen and heard his little son Fabius, who is only eleven years old. Nothing can be more beautiful and graceful than his countenance, figure, and manner. When ordered to sing, he perfectly enchanted us with his voice; then he recited an heroic poem, and with such skill, that you might have thought him a little Roscius; then he was asked to turn certain verses into prose, which, after deliberating a little, he did with so admirable a choice of words, that you would have been astonished. Yet his modesty is equal to his talents; and he was not even allowed to take his food sitting. After dinner, riding a most spirited horse, the animal fell with him, and when we all hastened up in terror, he spoke such words of encouragement to his father, that you would easily see what a generous mind he had. However, he was drawn from under the animal without injury, and so ended the day."

But perhaps we have paused too long here. Upon the whole, nothing is clearer than the fact which, in the first place, though

* Wordsworth.

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it were a truism, we were bent on establishing. Childhood and youth are joyous, amorous of joy. So extending the invitation to all alike, we may repeat the poet's lines, and say,

"Joy smiles in the fountain, health flows in the rills,
As their ribands of silver unwind from the hills:
They breathe not the mist of the bacchanal's dream,
But the lilies of innocence float on their stream.
Then a health and a welcome to children once more;
They bring us a passport that laughs at our door;
It is written on crimson,—its letters are pearls,—
It is countersigned Nature.—So, room for the girls*."

Here then we have come to a very useful lesson, yielded by the spirit and custom of the Children's Bower; for the conclusion to be drawn from observing them, is to teach us that this trait of early life, however maligned or slighted, should be retained as long as possible, and where there is not a contrary obligation involved in some exceptional state of life, even imitated by persons long grown up, in whom the custom of sadness, without any reason, may have been allowed to alter and disfigure nature. Plato has well shown that we ought not to seek the good in what he calls the unmixed life, but in the mixed one; that a life of pure intellect was not intended for us; and that in fact, so far from its being all-eligible and consummate good, such a life would be insufficient for any one. Nevertheless, the mature mind has often overlooked this truth, which all who are young practically receive. We may remark, in the first place, that there is an antagonistic school, a school of austerity, of formality, of rigour, and, above all, of "respectability," that would do nothing, as Petruchio complains, but sit at table,

"Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat!"

and even, as if it inherited the spirit of Tiberius, that would look scowling on the young, whether they spoke or whether they were mute, "crimen ex silentio, ex voce†;" a school that would discountenance the joyous spirit altogether, and deny "those rights of mirth and laughter which God has created, as well as tears," the existence of which faction, only renders the lesson of

* Holmes. † Tacitus, Ann. iv.

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the bower in this respect so much the more important for every one of us in these days, when "an we be but merry, I wis we shall be blamed." It is an old folly, this opposition to it. Critolaus was pleased to think that pleasure was, in itself, an evil, and the parent of evils; nor were there wanting amongst the Cynics men who held the same opinion. The Indian gymnosophists would not allow even young people to laugh, because they said, great sillies! that it was abhorrent from the gravity of philosophy. When Cato accused Muræna of dancing, Cicero's defence of him was curious enough. He admonished him not to throw such a calumny on a consul, but to consider how many other crimes a man must needs be guilty of, before that of dancing could be truly objected to him, since nobody ever danced, even in solitude, or at a private meeting of friends, who was not either drunk or mad; for dancing was always the last act of riotous banquets or shameful pleasures,—that Cato, therefore, charged him with what was the effect of many vices, yet with none of those without which that vice could not possibly subsist. All this sounds very fine and grave, no doubt; but in the same speech Cicero exhorts Cato not to deprive the people of the gladiators and feasts which their ancestors had approved of!—which entreaty is a little startling after such a prelude. The fact, therefore, was, that the philosopher who thought dancing a crime, held the killing of men in this way to be, as an ancestral institution, quite a legitimate amusement. Commend me rather to the spirit of Sir John Davies, no mean philosophical poet, who divided his leisure thoughts between metrical treatises on the art of dancing and on the immortality of the soul.

Unhappily, however, it is not alone the ancient pagans who set themselves to oppose the notions of our bower in respect to joyousness and play. There are not wanting still many who never play at all, nor would let play if they could have their will; seeming to think that every one, both young and old, must resemble, and to desire that every one else should resemble that Albertus Trimulus, whom Picus of Mirandula cites among prodigies, who, when a child, used to be so delighted with a draught of rhubarb, that he would beseech his nurse to give it to him, not as medicine, but to gratify his palate.

What charming characters, opposed to the joyous spirit of the

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bower, there are in the world, to be sure! What engaging portraits, if all ranged in a gallery by themselves, as if ever seen they ought to be! If it is not quite so easy now-a-days to find such a terrible representative of them as the Père Tellier, "with a mind," as Saint-Simon says, "hard and obstinate, constantly applied, void of all taste, enemy of all recreation, of all society, of all amusement*," yet it is not uncommon to find a match for that Pussort, all his life the dictator, arbiter, and master of the whole family of the Colberts; of whom Saint-Simon says, "ill-tempered, with the mien of an angry cat, of an austerity that awed; hard, and of difficult access; a fagot of thorns, without amusement or any pleasure, who wished to be master every where, and who was master, for the reason that every one feared him †." Baldesanus, in his Book of Instructions for Christian Youth, austere, severe, and rigid, exaggerates gravity so far as to condemn even those "who, to avoid idleness, give themselves to taking walks; which sort of amusement," he says very seriously, "does good to neither the body nor the mind ‡!" Of the poor body, indeed, such monitors of course think very little, when they do not even agree with the Anabaptists and others of that age, that its maladies are better than its health, and that it is sinful to apply to medicine for their cure; whose objections in consequence to that art Cardinal Palæotus refutes §; but it seems almost as extravagant to insist thus through austerity or formality, for some persons would sacrifice life itself to stateliness, on contradicting not only the voice of nature, but also that of our sweet kind Master, Christ, the lover of innocence, who in saying, as Gerson remarks, "Cecinimus vobis, nec saltastis," wished by the example of the manner of children to teach us humility and simplicity, and many other things, placing before our eyes, as in this instance, the children and youths singing and dancing in the streets ||.

It is not too much to affirm, in opposition to such sages, that Christianity was distinguished from the philosophy of the

* Tom. vii. 52. † Mém. i. 411.
‡ Baldesan. Stimul. Virtut. Adolescentiæ Christianæ.
§ Sermo ad Medicæ Artis Professores.
|| Tractat. I. de Cantic.

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ancients, and from the austerity and rigour of its early heretics, by the sanction which it expressly gave to that joyous spirit, which seeks recreation of every kind compatible with virtue, and that too, that we may put in a word for our visitors, without appearing in the least to confine its indulgence to any period of human life. Christianity, in fact, was in such harmony with children's feelings in this respect, that we find it condemned by heretics in primitive times precisely on account of its genial and humane influence. "Who is the most holy amongst you," asks the Montanist, Tertullian, like a true rhetorician citing the things that sound worst, "but he who gives a dinner oftenest? but he who is the most generous host?—the best drinker? You are animals, you are hunters, you savour of Esau*." It has often been remarked in later times that there is a close connexion between the joyousness of a people and not alone the innocence of its manners, but also its faith. England, notwithstanding the miseries of a semi-barbarous state, was merrier in the days of Chaucer than at present, though of late there have been some successful attempts by the population to shake off in part the gloom which had subsequently spread over her. We can find no doubt still, when not too proud to look for him, that poet's host of the "gentle ostelrie, the Tabbard, fast by the Bell:"

"A semely man our ooste was withalle,
For to have been a marchal in an halle;
Eke therto he was right a merry man.
And after soper with myrthe he bygan,
Lo, by my trouthe, if that I schal not lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye."

But whatever tales followed on this particular occasion, we may be sure that this mirth and love of mirth were in a general way purer and more intense, when the times were such, that a host, like that jolly Englishman, might be expected to salute such parting guests with

"Ye goon to Caunturbury; God you speede,
The blisful martir quyte you youre meede!"

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* De Jejun. 17.

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"These are much sadder ages," says a great author, "than the early ones; sadder in a dim wearied way, the way of ennui, and jaded intellect, and uncomfortableness of soul and body. Our festivity is not of the heart. How wonderfully, since Shakspeare's time, have we lost the power of laughing at bad jests! the very finish of our wit belies our gaiety *." Wherever the old Christianity exists, the people have the joyousness of youth, as in the instance described by Madame de Grignan, where, speaking of a certain population in the south of France, she says, "Here people live to 110 years of age. No diseases are known; the air and the water preserve both health and beauty. If there be a people that comes up to the idea of the happy people represented in Telemachus, it is this of Mazargnes. They are laborious; their land is cultivated like a garden; they are rich; no one is without necessaries. Gaiety reigns there; so that on days of rest, after praying to God in the innocence of their hearts, they dance so beautifully, that no ball-room can be more agreeable to behold." Gerson has one very remarkable passage on this subject; for, speaking of associations and the influence of places, after remarking that some persons are assisted in regard to mystic theology by darkness and gloom, who in consequence choose crypts and cells; others, by bright places open to the sky, who repair to deserts and mountains, where, as St. Jerome says, the air is more serene "quam in fumosis urbibus;" that some are impeded by noises, and others find them as agreeable as the murmur of brooks or foliage, he adds, though indeed with extreme caution, that there are some, for whom all that nuptial apparatus, consisting in dancing and music, in jests and amusement, in the beauty of women with golden attire, encircled with variety, turns to the most sincere exultation of mind, verifying the words of the Apostle, that "diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum;" and adopting the manner of bees who find their honey †. Cardinal Palæotus, in his great work on the government of the diocese of Bologna, gives express directions for the youths of the seminaries and schools to have recreation every day; to have, moreover, liberty once a week of going out of the city to walk in the

* Ruskin.

† De Mystica Theologia Practica.

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fields, to have times for hearing concerts of music, and for play either out of doors or within them *. If nothing of all this will content our Catos, let them in fine please to notice a very fair and obvious deduction from words that they must hear in silence if they will not follow one famous example, and proceed to the extremest length that such severity was ever known to go while Christian at all. Let them hear and ponder the sentence, "Sinite parvulos, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and there's nothing left for them but to come, without any more snarling, to the bower. For we have just beheld what these little ones are in respect to this disposition; we have seen how joyous and gay they are, loving all that is beautiful and sweet around them, loving the pleasures that present themselves, in colour, sound, motion, in the varieties and changes of each day, in all that is smiling, and happy, and loving. This consideration, then, alone must be sufficient to set the question for ever, as far as ordinary mortals are concerned, practically at rest.

In fairness we must admit, however, that the very gravest Christian professors are not backward to note the distinction to which we have been calling attention. The Père Lebrun expressly says that he does not require as much renouncement of the pleasures of life from the young as Cicero would insist on; "for Cicero," he continues, "when stating what studies demanded, says, 'all pleasures must be given up, all delights, —ludus, jocus, convivium, sermo etiam pæne omnium familiarium;'" whereas he, all monastic as he is, avows that a Christian teacher requires no such sacrifice: "Laxiores tamen tibi," he says to the youth he is addressing, "habenas tribui velim †." I feel much obliged to him; and in truth he might well admit all this; for the old poet was right in saying,

"——— studium puerile fatiscit
Læta nisi austeris varientur festa professis ‡."

Gravity that would contradict him is seldom, in fact, little better than a form of imposture. If it does not arise from sickness or an imperfect organization, it is nothing but a sham. The holy

* De Bonon. Eccles. Admin. par. v. 359.
† Institutio Juventutis Christianæ. ‡ Ausonius.

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fathers and saints seem to have been thorough boys in their early life. Minucius Felix, speaking of his dear friend Octavius, says that he had always had one will with himself both in jest and earnest,—"et in ludicris et seriis;" and he describes the play of some boys trying who should make a flat stone leap farthest over the water, as if he had himself felt quite an interest in the sport. St. Augustin, speaking of his boyhood with Alypius, says, "We used to play together,—pariter luseramus;" and he seems to have had quite a "Boys' Own Book" in his head; for, on one occasion, in the gravest of his works, he says, "I began to consider whether there was any play of children that required such words as 'Tolle, lege,' to be sung out, and I could not remember having ever heard of such words as part of a game." Gerson, observing that all animals of a generous nature are more moved by kindness than by cruelty, and applying the remark to children, insists on the advantage and necessity of those who are to instruct them becoming themselves like children in order to win them, laughing with them when they laugh, favouring their play and amusements, and showing an affable and comic condescension.

Of course, in the early as in the later years of man, there are pleasures and amusements which must be either unknown or sacrificed:

> "Qui legitis flores et humi nascentia fragra,
> Frigidus, o pueri, fugite hinc, latet anguis in herba."

But this is one of the lessons involved in the very observations which we have been making in the bower. If you would cultivate its tastes, and find pleasure in any show, it must be like what Pepys calls "as merry and the most innocent play that ever he saw." It must partake of that character which Sterne ascribes to the dance he saw in France, when he says, "I fancied I could distinguish an elevation of spirit, different from that which is the cause or the effect of simple jollity. In a word, I thought I beheld religion mixing in the dance, as if a cheerful and contented mind was recognized as a sort of thanks to Heaven." But with many of us, alas! as we advance in life,

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"——— our natures do pursue
(Like rats that ravin down their proper bane)
A thirsty evil; and when we drink we die."

As there are the dangerous classes among the population, which the police have to keep an eye on, so are there the dangerous classes among tastes and pleasures, which by domestic discipline must be interdicted; but we find little trace of them in the bower, unless in the form of a toy horse-race. There the young need no long spoon. But when they leave those happy seats, alas the day! "O nimis inimica amicitia," exclaims St. Augustin, alluding to what follows, "et seductio mentis investigabilis! cum dicitur, eamus, faciamus, et pudet non esse impudentem." "To this danger we are exposed," as a great writer says, "chiefly in the fact of our ceasing to be children. For the child does not seek false pleasure; its pleasures are true, simple, and instructive: but the youth is apt to abandon his early and true delights for vanities, seeking to be like men, and sacrificing his natural and pure enjoyments to his pride." If any one should propose such sinister things in the bower, with words like these,

"Pleasures of every sense can be your servants,"

those who breathe its spirit would reply with Raybright, in "The Sun's Darling," ay, pleasures

"——— to threaten ruin,
Corrupt the purity of knowledge, wrest
Desires of better life to those of this,
This scurvy one, this life scarce worth the keeping!"

Loving, as they all do, to turn a tune, the young may wish to learn singing, though from somebody that will only charge a shilling the quarter; but it won't be to merit such reproaches as Malvolio addressed to the boon companions, for gabbling like tinkers "at this time of night, for making an alehouse of his lady's house, squeaking out their cosiest catches without any mitigation or remorse of voice, there being no respect of place, persons, nor time, in them!" The jollity of the bower is not exactly that of men,

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"Who in their orgies with loathed wassailers
Will gaily laugh, while their remember'd home
Gnaws like a viper at their secret heart."

But what do you lose by shunning and renouncing the whole class of dearly-purchased amusements? As Lamb says, "When Adam laid out his first penny upon nonpareils at some stall in Mesopotamos, I think it went hard with him, reflecting upon his old goodly orchard, where he had so many for nothing." See if you can find any pleasure antagonistic to the innocence of youth without thorns. "Choose," says St. Augustin, "what you please, avarice,-luxury, or ambition. To find the thorns, I do not speak of hell, but take care not to become your own hell*." Talent will minister to pleasures of this kind, and seek to mix them with intellect; but then

"No genuine gladness its exertions cause,
The frailest heart denies sincere applause."

Such pleasures might send

"The yongest man that is in al this route,"

through sheer disgust and weariness, back to the children who alone seem to know, in this order of things, what can be well chosen. "Nocet empta dolore voluptas," says St. Bernard, "cujus tristes esse exitus nemo nescire permittitur, nisi, qui vel non peccavit, vel non bene de peccato pœnituit."

"Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain
These simple pleasures of the youthful train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm than all the gloss of art.
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway.
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,

* In Ps. cii.

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In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy."

But the lesson which in this chapter is proposed to us, is less concerned with the abuse, about which your old women of both sexes seem so well informed, than with the use and excellence of the joyous spirit; and therefore to observe the innocence and consequences of this disposition, let us leave other reminiscences, and return to such pleasures as may beseem some well-reputed lad.

"Tired of play! tired of play!
There will come an eve to a longer day,
That will find thee tired,—but not of play!
And thou wilt lean, as thou leanest now,
With drooping limbs and aching brow,
And wish the shadows would faster creep,
And long to go to thy quiet sleep.
Well were it then if thine aching brow
Were as free from sin and shame as now!
Well for thee, if thy lip could tell
A tale like this, of a day spent well *."

Stranger, it is not the chapter of play and joyousness that need trouble your conscience, if it reveals only such things practised by you in the spirit of the bower. Think rather about your serious, and earnest, and laborious, and sad hours, that have a purpose

"More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends
Of burning youth."

For perhaps it is these which indicate that you are idle in the worst sense, and not even doing your own business, as Plato affirms † of the money-making man, who takes care of every thing but of himself, that is, of his soul. It is in the fifth circle of the nether world that Dante finds that which sadness but ex-

* Willis. † 1 Alcibiad.

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presses punished; and a great author, no doubt with a view to the causes which often produce it, says, on occasion of reckoning those seven circles, in each of which, according to its depth, the woe is more intense: "There is, perhaps, nothing more notable in this system than the profound truth couched under the attachment of so terrible a penalty to sadness. I do not know words," he adds, still looking, I suppose him, at what is not visible or expressed, "that might with more benefit be remembered than these simple ones:

'——— We once were sad
In the sweet air, made gladsome by the sun,
Now in these murky settlings are we sad*.'"

"The rivers of Babylon," says St. Augustin, loosely translating his words, "are all the things that one loves inordinately, with an intention wholly wrong, in the world, and that pass. Agriculture, war, the bar, commerce,—all these may be rivers of Babylon. The citizens of Jerusalem, in their captivity, understand them as being capable of becoming such—they do not throw themselves into them beyond what duty requires. They keep seated on their banks, and they weep, remembering Sion †." Affairs, business, engagements, how often do they involve men of advanced years in sadness! Hear a stern voice: "Happiness is not come to you," after all your success in labouring for what perisheth, and forsaking the spirit of the bower, "nor like to come; ennui, with its great waste ocean-voice, moans answer, Never, never. Let perpetual change be your portion; incur that Prophet's curse, make yourselves like unto a wheel; mount into your railways; whirl from place to place at the rate of fifty, or, if you like, of five hundred miles an hour; you cannot escape from that inexorable, all-encircling ocean-moan of ennui. No, if you would mount to the stars, and do yacht-voyages under the belts of Jupiter, or stalk deer on the ring of Saturn, it would still begirdle you. You cannot escape from it; you can but change your place in it."

Well might the poet in later life exclaim,—

* Stones of Venice. † In Ps. cxxxvi.

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"Visions of childhood! oft have ye beguil'd
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs.
Ah! that once more I were a careless child*!"

Melancholy, the utter negation of the spirit, or, as we might say, the effacing of the colour of the bower, is one of the great evils against which persons long grown up should guard themselves; for otherwise this fatal disposition denounced by apostles, and of which the end was foretold by prophets, will invade and dispossess them. So Piccolomini says to Wallenstein,

"——— I find myself
As among strangers! not a trace is left
Of all my former wishes, former joys.
Where has it vanish'd to? There was a time
When ev'n, methought, with such a world as this,
I was not discontented. Now, how flat!
How stale! No life, no bloom, no flavour in it!
My comrades are intolerable to me."

"I find," says Goldsmith, "that age and knowledge only contribute to sour our dispositions. My present enjoyments may be more refined, but they are infinitely less pleasing. The music of the finest singer is dissonance to what I felt when our old dairy-maid sung me into tears with Johnny Armstrong's last good night, or the cruelty of Barbara Allen." Sadness is greatly disliked in the bower, as far as it can be known there. Our little John, for his part, would never, if he could help it, be accessory to its propagation. Himself always contented and cheerful, he would never contribute to make any one for a moment melancholy. He evinced this disposition to the last hours of his life, remonstrating with those who mourned to see him ill. At other times, "I am quite well," he used to say when he had been indisposed, "all right, I'm all right." But sadness, as we have observed, is no less denounced as evil by the highest school,—"Tristitiam non des animæ tuæ, et non affligas temetipsum in consilio tuo." "Sadness," says the Père Boutauld, "serves to nothing but to change the shadows and appearances of evil into true and immortal evils†." "Sad-

* Coleridge.

† Conseilles de la Sagesse.

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ness," says Charron, "is not alone the enemy of nature, but it attacks God also; for it is nothing else but a rash and outrageous complaint against the Lord of the universe, and the common law of the world. We are here not to give the law, but to receive it*." Judging from their faces and their dress, you might think some men carry their conscience without side. Is it not very remarkable to find, as Ruskin points out, how constantly innocent things are bright in colour, and venomous things sombre, either grey, or brown, or of a gravel hue? "Compare," he says, "sunrises, roses, violets, butterflies, birds, gold fish, rubies, opals, and corals," he might have added, as representing the tastes of the young and of the common people, ribands and neckties of all the colours in the rainbow, "with alligators, hippopotami, lions, wolves, bears, swine, sharks, slugs, fungi, frogs, and corrupting, stinging, destroying things in general," and he might have added, the sombre weeds that melancholy people affect, as if to show their scorn of all nature's brightness, "and you will feel then how the question stands, and which of these tastes have nature and life on their side, and which have sin and death†." The cheerfulness of the French used to pass for folly with the English; but is their gloominess, asks Goldsmith, a greater mark of wisdom? Plato, convinced that whatever makes men happier makes them better, advises to neglect nothing that may excite and convert to an early habit the sense of joy in children. "Gravity is the inseparable companion of pride." And, in fact, the joyousness of children, from which we are here endeavouring to take a lesson, is nothing else but the consequence or the attendant of that innocence, simplicity, and goodness, which we observed in the first chapters. Hilarity, as Plato remarks, derived its old name, *εὐφροσύνη* or *εὐφεροσύνη*, from the soul being *εὖ*, well, *συμφέρεσθαι*, borne along, with all things‡. It is certain that some of the noblest characters we read of in history, were observed to have had a great susceptibility for joy. Saint-Simon says that the Duc de Beauvilliers was born "aimant tous les plaisirs§." Children, if they could ever think about

* De la Sagesse.
† Modern Painters, vol. iv.
‡ Cratylus.
§ T. xi. 189.

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their own character approvingly, might say of themselves, while still with their first tastes,

> "The happiest of folk are the guiltless and free,
> And who are so guiltless, so happy as we?
> We harbour no passions by luxury taught,
> We practise no arts with hypocrisy fraught:
> What we think in our hearts you may read in our eyes,
> For knowing no falsehood, we need no disguise."

Such might be the ditty in the bower, that true clime of the free; for the sweetest freedom is an honest heart. But how far is the worldly mind from that freedom! I shall thank you, says Parthenophill,

> "When my unsettled thoughts can make me sensible,
> Of what 'tis to be happy."

Ay, just so; at present you cannot even conceive what the word means. And so it is with all whose consciences are troubled. All men's thoughts till they condescend to breathe the air of our bower are unsettled, and they cannot tell what happiness means. Many persons cannot realize even a moment's joyousness, unless inspired by wine; for

> "To a sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
> Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:
> So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
> It spills itself in fearing to be spilt."

But see how even in boys and youths, the purer and simpler the mind is, the gayer it is. Look, again, at little John. What artist could impart the expression of felicity which sparkles in those eyes, of that sublime and spiritual, as well as natural joy? Look at his eldest brother, ever with "a countenance as clear as friendship wears at feasts." And I must observe here, that he would never have any thing to do with practical jokes, which he detested as unkind, even when they went no farther than the jest which the Duc de Lauzun played off on the Comte de Tessé, at the camp of Compiègne, when persuading him that it was his privilege to wear a white hat before the king, as colonel-general, for which the poor count despatched a courier to Paris, to the great amusement of the whole

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court next day; or that of Caumartin, whispering to Breteuil "Moses," when the latter could not tell Mons. de Pontchartrain who composed the Pater*. Tom could never take pleasure in any thing that might cause another a moment's pain; but every hour he found something to make himself gay and others merry. Open the book of memorials of Saint Acheul, what do you find there recorded of the most innocent and religious students? "Ferdinand Egret," says its grave author, "with all his angelic piety was naturally gay, and he used to give himself with all his heart to the amusements which are the charm of early life." Again, Felix-Andrew Mitevié, so distinguished for piety, was the merriest boy. "His religion did not quench his natural gaiety, which rendered virtue in him as amiable as it was pure. This gaiety made him peculiarly apt for contriving parties for play, and for excursions in times of recreation." There is still another instance. "Marius Olive, in his seventh year, eminent for his piety and charity, was of such an excessive gaiety, that the least trifle used to make him burst out into laughter; but this humour," adds the timid biographer, "was only the result of vivacity and lightness." I wonder if he thought it could have had a worse origin. He certainly supposes the worst, and I am unwilling to admit even his hypothesis. What a delightful thing is the laugh of young people, that are all in good nature with creation, who only laugh at and with one another; who laugh till they cry, and cry, poor things, often till they laugh! It is not the Ἄσβεστον γέλον, which Homer ascribes to the suitors when at the harmless stranger ἡδὺ γέλασσαν. Nor is it the gross inextinguishable jubilation of his "happy" gods, excited by the limping of poor Vulcan through the house; though James the First, who thought no indifferent gesture so seldom done without sin as laughing, assumed that "'tis commonly raised upon things to be pitied, and therefore to laugh and to sin are one." It certainly is not what this royal pedant supposed it to be: neither is it the sound that issues from the haunts of Sir Toby and his boon companions, where no one knows from experience that laughter cures thirst; still less is it the horrible laugh expressed

* Saint-Simon, Mém. ii. 188. 224.

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by the sculptors of the ignoble grotesque, when in the fifteenth century scorn was to banish faith; it is not the laughter heard in legislative assemblies, or that of Congreve's fine ladies and gentlemen, of whom some one says that "the best as well as worst of them are only fit to laugh and to perish." Such sounds have no resemblance to it; I'm sure I can't say what it is like. It is not music, it is not eloquence, it is not wit, but the humiliating fact, if you will think it to be so, is, that it moves you more than all; it changes your state of mind more suddenly than all—unless, indeed, you resemble in character Lord Froth, who thinks "there is nothing more unbecoming a man of quality than to laugh; saying, 'tis such a vulgar expression; and then the idea of smiling at the jest of an inferior person, of being pleased with what pleased the crowd! I never laugh even at a comedy. No; I look grave, and ask the cause of this immoderate mirth; I do not so much as smile. You laugh all the while as if you were ready to die, and I hear it, and look thus; would not you be disappointed?" Well, leaving such adepts, what is the effect naturally produced? Here I am standing in a grove, with eyes riveted on a solemn book, grim-looking enough, as to its covering and dimensions, excepting that like an innocent it has got a button, and a thong, and hooks and eyes, and I know not what besides, to keep it well wrapped up when you let it go out of your sight; and there you are looking on as grave as any long-bearded philosopher could desire. But what is that going on there beyond the fence? Some errand-boys, having laid down their baskets, are chatting outside, bursting out every minute into a hearty laugh, as if ready to die of it; for my part, there is no alternative; I must close the book, without ever buttoning it, take a peep at them under the boughs, and without in the least knowing why or wherefore, join in the good round laugh as heartily as the youngest of them. Perhaps it would be well if many men's studies could meet, from time to time, with a similar interruption. "The inimicitious passions which belong to them might be driven down in consequence into their duodenums," with great advantage to all her Majesty's subjects who have to do with them; for, depend upon it, as an old witty writer says, in a kingdom of hearty-laughing subjects the body politic is saved

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from many disorders. It is Johnson himself who says, "he can scarcely fail to receive from the most careless and obstreperous merriment which virtue can allow some useful hints; the loose sparkles of thoughtless wit may give light to the mind; and the gay contention for paradoxical positions rectify the opinions." An old English writer says, "Some are of a very cheerful disposition; and God forbid that such should be condemned for lightness! Oh, let not any envious eye disinherit men of that which is their portion in this life, comfortably to enjoy the blessings thereof!" Gerson at times seems to have taken a similar view; for he says in one remarkable passage, "It appears that the rational and animal operations of man vary according to the disposition of his spirit, which influences his heart. If this spirit be lightsome, serene, subtle, and harmonious, the whole man will be more joyful, and more prompt, if devout, to praising God; more ingenious to think of Him; more apt, as if liquefied, to love Him, if he do not abuse the gift. Certainly, we say, that such a serenity of spirit is the gift of God, whether it comes immediately from Him, or mediately through an angelic ministry, or through the temper of the complexion and bodily disposition, or by the instrumentality of the prayers of the saints. Let them glory in the Lord who possess such a gift in this night of our mortality. Their mind is as a continual feast; and their joy of the heart exceeds all other gladness *."

In Christian times these lessons seem to be as safe as they are useful, since we are not reduced to the dilemma of Cicero, who had to seek for men least malicious among the Epicureans, of whom he says, when combating them, "Viri optimi nam nullum genus est minus malitiosum." The joyous school, ever prompt to admit the distinctions which the variety of vocations demand, may still, indeed, be the least malicious, but it is no longer associated with opinions dangerous to human society, or inimical to the life of faith. In fact, joy is the colouring of life, and susceptibility to joy is like the sense of colour,—of all God's gifts to the sight of man the holiest, the most divine. Let us, without entering into the artistic question, close with the observation of

* Tractatus I. de Canticis.

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that great author who says, "that the opposite poles of art in this respect are Frà Angelico and Salvator Rosa; of whom the one was a saint. His pictures are simply so many pieces of jewellery, the colours of the draperies being perfectly pure, as various as those of a painted window, chastened only by paleness, and relieved upon a gold ground. Salvator was a dissipated jester and satirist; a man who spent his life in masquing and revelry. But his pictures are full of horror, and their colour is, for the most part, gloomy grey. Truly it would seem as if art had so much eternity in it, that it must take its dye from the close rather than the course of life. In such laughter the heart of man is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness *."

Upon the whole, then, I think, if you observe a little and reflect more, that this lesson which we receive so early from a visit to the Children's Bower, is as important as any other; and if you are not pleased with it, I won't deceive you by promising any thing better in the sequel. If men would only learn from youth "the music of a happy and a happy-making disposition, they would accomplish much; they would not then be for depriving others of enjoyment, and taking from them their liberty; they would feel and act towards others like those who have themselves felt and endured much, who have enjoyed much, and known what it was to be deprived of enjoyment; and that retention of the spirit of youth which is implied by the susceptibility for joy, would argue well for the largeness of their mind †." To the children, at all events, every one might say in the words of Evelyn to Pepys, "Let me live among your inclinations, and I shall be happy." It is great folly for opening manhood to neglect this lesson, as if fearing the Homeric reproof,

——————— οὐδέτι σε χρὴ
Νηπιάας ὀχέειν, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔτι τηλίκος ἐσσί,

and invoking that experience which Holmes describes in the affecting lines—

"Alas! with every year I feel
Some roses leave my brow;
Too young for wisdom's tardy seal,
Too old for garlands now."

* Ruskin, The Stones of Venice. † L. Hunt.

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René-Marie-Albert de Jouenne d'Esgrigny hearing another lad say that he rather liked the thought of dying, the world was so full of sorrow, replied, "that he ought not to think like that, but that he should hold to life." The boy's lesson was worthy of an older head, though he, poor fellow, was not himself to practise it. The fault and error are no less great when maturity and age disdain this lesson, either through pride, or that weakness which suggests the line—

ἐμὲ δὲ χρὴ γήραϊ λυγρῷ
πείθεσθαι.

It is wiser to grow old on youth's footing in this respect, and to say with Madame de Sevigné, "J'ai un coin de folie qui n'est pas encore mort;" for when the affections break loose, as in the bower, "joy is another name for religion." It is wiser when in company with children to invoke even what is too often called Folly, saying,

"———— Folly, children! why
His company is music next to yours;
Both of you are a consort, and your tunes
Lull me asleep; and when I most am sad
My sorrows vanish from me in soft dreams."

It is no less an error when maturity and age despair of recovering in this life the joyous spirit of the bower, as in the lines—

"There groups of merry children played,
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed.
O precious hours! O golden prime,
And affluence of love and time!
Even as a miser counts his gold,
Those hours the ancient time-piece told—
For ever—never,
Never—for ever*!"

For ever there no doubt in amaranthine bowers; but why should the joy of their vestibule never visit our hearts again on earth? Such necessities are self-imposed. Indeed, this grace and gaiety, these sweeter dispositions, more brilliant and more youthful,

* Longfellow.

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seem by a singular law to return in old age to all great minds. In proportion as they acquire a more elevated view of men and things, their way of looking at them becomes more serene, more cheerful, and full of hope; and the same poet seems to feel that this is true, for he says elsewhere, and with his lines we may close the chapter,—

"The green trees whispered low and mild,
It was a sound of joy!
They were my playmates when a child,
And rocked me in their arms so wild!
Still they looked at me and smiled,
As if I were a boy;
And ever whispered, mild and low,
'Come, be a child once more!'
And waved their long arms to and fro,
And beckoned silently and slow.
Oh, I could not choose but go
Into the woodlands hoar!"

CHAPTER V.

ELL, this is a good hiding-place; 'tis silence all. Here the furze of the bright common enclose us two, Jack, in a small circle, and their golden tops are so high that you can stand upright with your old straw hat, penthouse-like over the shop of your eyes, and no risk of its being seen above them by our hunters. Dear little boy! here we are together, all shut in by ourselves, as if there was no one else in the world; how your dark eyes do sparkle amidst these azure bells as I sit on my heels close to you on this cushion of moss and thyme! Hark! do you hear the sharp crackling sounds on all sides? These are occasioned, they tell us, by the sudden bursting of the pods of the furze, which are composed of a dry horny substance; and immediately that they are opened by the heat, they suddenly curl themselves

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into a spiral form, and scatter their seeds to a considerable distance. But hush, down, lie close! here come the dogs, and K——, far spent with toil, and panting with the race. Do you hear how he puffs and blows? They've had a hard run of it. I declare here's Gyp, the first to smell us out! The little tawny wretch! hold him fast, lest he betray us; but there's no use. They are all here after him; so, being caught, we may now invite the others to sit down quietly with us; and when they have recovered breath a little, to begin the lecture. Spite of spite, need must they rest awhile. No more about the chace now—

"Desine plura, puer; et quod nunc instat agamus."

A visit to the Children's Bower has already presented us, unless I am greatly mistaken, with some really useful and agreeable lessons. To learn the art of being gay and merry by keeping a clear conscience, in imitation of their innocence and goodness, is pretty well for a beginning. It is learning the elements of happiness, of which the art constitutes the best of all sciences. What follows will be little else but a continuation of the same study, though each subject till the end may be proposed under a different and distinct title; but before leaving our rudiments, there remains for us to con one lesson which is suggested by every thing we see and hear in this company; for we have yet to observe how children love all common things in the world that unfolds itself daily before them; how they delight in all God's work; and how they put themselves, as it were, in affectionate communion with the beauties and varieties of nature.

The first form in which this disposition is developed may seem puerile enough; for we may begin to trace it in a fondness for animals, some of which, of one kind or other, are sure to be found with children whenever they may be gathered together, though certain classes of them may cause some small uneasiness, as when our little people sing with fairies—

"Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence you long-legg'd spinners, hence;
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence."

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The brooklet itself, in consideration of its inhabitants, has some terrors for them, though you may say to each—

> "Do not fear to put thy feet
> Naked in the rivers sweet;
> Think not leech, or newt, or toad
> Will bite thy foot where thou hast trod."

But nature gives them companions to their taste. Their bower is not like that cave which the Greeks called Ἄορνον, and the Latins "Avernus." They live in summer with the birds flying over and around them. As a biographer of Audubon says, "A love of birds is in some degree natural to children. They feel an interest in the animal creation; they love to defend them. Their business seems to lie among either the dogs, the rabbits, or the pigeons. Indeed, their friendship for birds will sometimes recall the style of St. Francis on Mount Alvernia, where his winged sisters, as he used to call them, seemed to contract such an affection for him, serving him for company, for examples, for clock and bell, and for sign of his strict alliance with the common Creator*." How like a timid lover will this little boy approach the bush in which his favourite thrush has built her nest! He at least will not be like Virgil's "durus arator" in respect to the pretty songster of the woods. He will remind you rather of the Emperor Charles V., who, when the swallow had built her nest upon his tent, ordered it, when he moved his camp, to be left standing till her young should have fled; for which action a Spanish preacher, as if he supposed his church and congregation to be only another form of the Children's Bower, actually commends him from the pulpit. Children, without being great ornithologists, have some secrets worth knowing respecting this whole race. They can tell you many things about

> "The ousel cock so black of hue,
> With orange-tawny bill,
> The throstle with his note so true,
> The wren with little quill."

Then, when summer dies and swallows fly away, they will

* Vital. Chronica Montis Alvernæ.

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begin to sympathize with Robin Redbreast, and to wonder what he will do who has sung so sweetly in the falling of the year.

"The fireside for the cricket,
The wheatstack for the mouse,
When trembling nightwinds whistle
And moan all round the house;
The frosty ways like iron,
The branches plumed with snow,—
Alas! in Winter dead and dark
Where can poor Robin go?
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin dear!
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer*."

It was a subject for a painter when John stood blank with finger on his mouth, looking so anxious, as if not knowing whether to laugh or cry when his sister's canary was found to be sick, and had to be carried in its cage to one that understood such grave cases. Alas! three weeks after the boy was dead, and the canary is still singing. The bird has survived him; the three dogs have survived him; but he is sought for in vain. We little thought how he might have said that evening, "Ecce, nunc in pulvere dormiam; et si manè me quæsieris, non subsistam!"

"Why should a dog, a bird, a rat have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never."

Children are not apt to moralize; but when the shortness of life seems for the first time to strike them, on hearing of symptoms of decline in some favourite dog or bird, their countenance sufficiently indicates that, through a consideration of our common lot, they are capable of giving an invitation even to a fly to partake with them of brief blessings, though they may not be able to find such words to convey it as those of the poet, saying,—

* W. Allingham.

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"Busy, curious, thirsty fly,
Drink with me, and drink as I;
Freely welcome to my cup,
Couldst thou sip and sip it up.
Make the most of life you may,
Life is short and wears away.
Both alike are mine and thine,
Hastening quick to their decline;
Thine's a summer, mine no more,
Though repeated to threescore;
Threescore summers, when they're gone,
Will appear as short as one."

But it is dogs, above all, that have the right of entrance wherever children are. I know not the author of the words or the air of "Old Dog Tray;" but though all our juveniles are daily singing or whistling it,—for what will they not snap at?—I feel convinced, and will maintain, that the song was expressly composed for our John Gerald. "There, look how Rose bounds! there, look at her!" little John would shout out; and then he would go off in fits of laughter. These two,—the boy and dog I mean,—were, in fact, inseparable. He may not have made himself, like Charles Lamb, the slave of his dog, choosing a particular walk precisely because Rose liked it, and he did not. They had pretty much the same tastes, and on such a point could seldom differ. He might call her at times "the sourest-natured dog that lived," for not shedding one tear when the bower was in an uproar and the cat wringing her hands, but for all that the dog was himself, and he was the dog, or the dog was he, and he was himself. In his dog, "ever faithful, ever kind," there was no affectation. As Hunt says, "When the dog looks affectionate, who doubts him?" He seemed to think at times that his dog could have a blessing, as the Earl of Arundel replied when the Lieutenant of the Tower reported that the earl's dog had been into Father Southwell's chamber*. Grave and stately Rose would always follow her friend, who was not as strong as herself, and woe to the rash playmate that laid a finger on John then! The boy doated on her, but there

* Life of the Earl Arundel, edited by the Duke of Norfolk, E. M.

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was no love lost between them. It was with difficulty that Rose was beaten back and prevented from following the coffin of her little friend when it was carried to the church. Here, on the other hand, is an instance in which the dog was mourned. It occurs in his brother's diary, found after his death, "Oct. 28. To-day our poor dog Tiny was killed, being run over by the train. We all lament his loss, as that of a good and true friend." The fact was, many tears were shed for him. Nom cried, and M—A cried, and K—, who buried him in silence, would have cried, if the suddenness of the whole thing had not stunned him; and the governess was seen wiping her eyes. John, like St. Francis of Assissi, used to call animals brothers and sisters, which titles ought not to offend those who hear the Church speaking of Mother Bee. So we used to hear "Sister Swallow," "Brother Gyp;" or—for he loved, as if he thought his dogs great rogues, that they should have many aliases—"Brother Honey," though in disposition this wiry little quadruped seemed sweet only to himself. His retriever, Rose, was Lady Fatty, duchess of Abingdon-place. Dash, his King Charles, was Dan, and he used to sing, "Dan, Dan's a fine man. Don't care what you say." Children mark "the amiable qualities of brutes." They can tell you wonderful stories about rabbits, and sheep, and pigeons; about the attachments formed between animals of different classes; as, for instance, between a cat and a horse, and between two birds. One of these friends, says Lord Brougham, as if he, too, had just been visiting the bower, "has been seen unable to survive the other." The friendships between the dog and child, as in the instance of Rose and John, are to be seen every day. The sagacity of a retriever causes unceasing wonder to its little master or mistress; but children, unlike the grown-up philosophers, feel their own superiority quite sufficiently established to leave all questions of jealousy out of view, when observing and admiring the intelligence of brutes. Without being professed sages, or caring to hear about Anaxagoras, considering all animals as rational, they know intuitively that the difference of degree with respect to intelligence becomes so vast between them and the cleverest animal that it amounts to the same as difference in kind—that with all their faculties, brutes are proof of there being no

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difference in kind which could make a greater diversity in the result than does exist. They may wish to think like Leibnitz, that the souls of brutes perish not; but without having, like Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, passed years in long meditations on the principles of classification, they feel instinctively that man is not alone a kind, but a class—a whole reign apart—the règne humain; and without having studied the question in regard to theology, they know that the separation between animals and the rational creature continues ever immeasurable, caused by the capacity of the latter to possess, besides its natural life, a certain gratuitous and divine life, a life of meritorious action, and a life of stable confirmation both in this world and in the next *.

From children, then, we can learn in an innocent way a rational, and even a kind of holy love for animals, as also an attentive observation of those instincts which exhibit such striking proofs of design, all tending to the preservation or to the comfort of the creatures endowed with them. The young, feeling that they have nothing to fear from the ridiculous neighbourhood that was assumed by the contemporaries of Voltaire, make themselves acquainted with these habits and instincts, and are easily led to consider in them the wonderful manifestation of divine skill in the Creator. In fine, we can learn from them to cherish that affectionate and sublime intercourse with all parts of animated nature, in which the most holy men have been known to indulge; for, without having ever heard about St. Francis, the child's admonition is often virtually that of "the ancient mariner:"

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou welcome guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man, and bird, and beast.

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
Both made and loveth all."

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* Gerson, De Vita spirituali Animæ.

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But the intercourse of children with nature is not confined to animals, it extends to all parts of the universal scene around them; and, as a great observer says, "there are few among those who love nature, who look not back to their youngest and least learned days as those of the most intense, insatiable, and beatific perception of her splendours." We can learn from them, therefore, that sympathy with all created things which forms so important an element in the artistic, poetic, philosophical, and also Christian life, when advanced beyond the jealousies of the weak, to its highest and most mysterious stage of spiritual elevation.

"I pity the man," says Sterne, "who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and cry, 'Tis all barren." So it is often to grown-up people; but not to the young, who cultivate the common fruits it offers, and find even in a desert wherewith to call forth their affections. Whether it be landscape or the human figure that is before them, they can often say truly of themselves, "Delectasti me, Domine, in factura tua, et in operibus manuum tuarum exultabo." They will often look silently at a flower or a leaf, as if they heard from it a friendly voice; and in truth they do hear such a voice from it, for it speaks to the young observant's soul like pure sanctity. One of the most dainty, delicate, and exquisite joys of the heart and mind, is to watch a little boy or girl observing nature and life around them, opening their intelligence to the beauties and wonders of the universe, applying the lessons of their catechism to what passes daily around them, and reducing to action, in an innocent, artless way of their own, the teaching of a holy mother. For the child is already arrived at the conclusion to which sixty years of scientific study led the illustrious Biot; that when our understanding has been able to recognize the external disposition of the organization, and to seize the intentional relations which the pieces that compose it have between themselves, it would be a logical contradiction not to see at the bottom of this aggregate the intelligent principle Himself who has ordered every thing, and regulated every thing.

To witness all this we need not look farther than the spot where our little John reclines so thoughtfully; for, as the poet says,—

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"His mind is a thanksgiving to the power
That made him: it is blessedness and love!"

He feels all the force of

"—— mystery and hope,
And the first virgin passion of a soul,
Communing with the glorious universe *."

Men grow tired, heart-sick of the spectacle of the world, all beautiful as it is, and however once they may have loved it; but when they see it reflected upon them from the pure minds of their children, the rapture and the mystery all come back as fresh to them again, as if they felt like Gray, when, after describing a sunrise, he added, "I wonder whether any body ever saw it before? I hardly believe it." Man, as philosophers say, "cannot make boast to have that which he hath, nor feels not what he owes, but by reflection." "I do not strain at the position," says one of them, "it is familiar; but no man is the lord of any thing till he communicate his parts to others; nor doth he of himself know them for aught till he behold them reflected back in others."

I doubt, if to the opening mind of childhood, the spectacle of the new marvellous world can supply greater pleasure than the reflection from its impressions yields to the observer, who watches them in the young. He sees how childhood

"In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power,
To kindle or restrain:"

He sees how nature influences him; how

"He shall be sportive as the fawn,
That, wild with glee, across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs;
And his shall be the breathing balm,
And his the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things."

The impressions in the bower, in this respect, are as charming as they are useful. If we doubt the charm, we have only to

* Wordsworth.

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imagine, and it is well for us if we have only to imagine ourselves, being suddenly deprived of them. When on the death of a lively and observant child, this reflected light no longer shines on us, every thing in nature and art seems to have lost its value; every thing sinks down to its own strict physical dimensions; the stone is no more a rock, the stream a river, the pond a lake; nothing is any longer susceptible of a use beyond that of the primary and mere material end. Then when the changes of the seasons come, being seen only by our own eyes, all the pleasure and mystery, all the romance and poetry are gone; we look no more for the swallow; we no longer listen for the nightingale. It's all one to us when they come or when they go. The world is no longer a place of successive enchantments, it is only a monotonous, flat, stale, and stern reality.

> "The spirits are so mute to manhood's ear,
> That tranced the boy with music*."

But let us return to the bower, where "vernal airs through trembling osiers play."

From children we can learn the habit of watching and observing the beauty, aptness, and design of common things, and also the custom of loving them; as if, to use the poet's words,—

> "It were enough for each to be
> Of common, natural things a part;
> To feel with bird, and stream, and tree,
> The pulses of the same great heart;
>
> "But we, from nature long exiled,
> In our cold homes of heart and thought,
> Grieve like the stranger-tended child,
> Which seeks its mother's arms, and sees, but feels them not†."

Let us begin by observing, that no one should think lightly of this lesson, or doubt the importance of its tendency. If we refuse to take it from children, we have it presented to us by the teaching and example, not alone of philosophers, but of saints. St. Bernard, who speaks of the smiling aspect of the

* Willis. † Whittier.

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earth, expatiates in his description of Clairvaux, on the natural beauties of the place, with an artist's or a child's fondness. Lactantius dilates at great length on the beauty of the different members of the human body, using the word "pulcherrimum," and saying, "cætera quam decora sint vix exprimi potest;" and again, it is difficult to say "utrumve species an utilitas major sit," for using all which terms he would, no doubt, be set down by some at present as very gross and sensual, and perhaps half a pagan. St. Ambrose, contrasting it with the moral, sends us to the natural world for examples of gratitude, saying, "The earth restores what you give to it a hundredfold. Men often deceive and defraud their creditors. The earth remains faithful; and if prevented by inclemency of seasons from paying its debt this year, it will make amends the next, so that its creditor shall never suffer loss." It is St. Ambrose who uses the expression "præcepti imperialis interpres natura;" and St. Augustin seems to accept a love for nature as an introduction to piety. "If you admire the world," saith he, "ought you not rather to admire its Creator? When you look at the heavens, and at that multitude of stars, you are overwhelmed. He who made them is your God. Place your hope in Him, in order to be happy *," What an infatuation must it be when this advice is not followed!

> "For put the case, in travel I may meet
> Some gorgeous structure, or brave frontispiece,
> Shall I stay captive in the outer court,
> Surprised with that, and not advance to know
> Who dwells there, and inhabiteth the house?
> There is my friendship to be made, within;
> With what can love me again; not with the walls,
> Doors, windows, archetraves, the frieze and cornice."

But to return to the outer court, and to the young admiring it. A great author explaining the saying of Raffaelle, that "the aim of art is to correct nature," observes that Raffaelle was a painter of humanity, "with which assuredly there is something the matter. We have most of us," he adds, "heard of original sin,

* In Ps. cxlv.

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and may perhaps, in our modest moments, conjecture that we are not quite what God or nature would have us to be. Raffaelle had something to mend in humanity; but," he continues, "I should have liked to have seen him mending a daisy, or any other of God's slightest works*!" Poets suppose angels animated with a love for the very objects that give delight to children. This may be a mere fancy, but really there are facts apparently unproduced by any general law, which can best be explained perhaps by such a fancy. For what purpose, unless it be for angels to admire them, are the most beautiful plants and flowers not growing elsewhere, found growing out of the snow on the summits of Chimborazo? We can hardly suppose them placed there merely to give pleasure, after existing for six thousand years, to Messieurs Rémy and Brenchley, when, in 1856, they ascended the mountain, on which human feet had never before trode. "Perhaps," says a living author, alluding to the colours of the tropical birds, "these gorgeous hues are intended for the pleasure of some unknown class of spiritual eyes, upon which no kind of beauty is lost, as it is too often upon man's. It is impossible to think of the countless beauties of nature, the myriads of paintings, animal, vegetable, and mineral, with which earth, air, and seas are thronged, and fancy them all made for no eyes but man's†." The poet, at all events, may be pardoned for saying to a departed child,

"I long to know if scenes like this
Are hidden from an angel's eyes;
If earth's familiar loveliness
Haunts not thy heaven's serener skies.

"For sweetly here upon thee grew
The lesson which that beauty gave,
The ideal of the pure and true
In earth, and sky, and gliding wave.

"And it may be that all which lends
The soul an upward impulse here,
With a diviner beauty blends
And greets us in a holier sphere‡."

* Stones of Venice.
† L. Hunt, Men, Women, and Books.
‡ Whittier.

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Poets are so impressed with a sense of the love for natural charms which exists in youth, that they even ascribe to it the choice of a grave in some place where those who come to visit it might enjoy them.

"I know, I know, I should not see
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
Nor its wild music flow;
But if around my place of sleep
The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go.
Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom
Should keep them lingering by my tomb*."

Yet all this kind of feeling, so deep, so elevated, so devout and mystical, has been barbarously ignored, or with a half-religious tone, formally contradicted and censured by despisers of our bower, theology itself, in modern times, being invoked to sanction such contempt of its lessons.

"With Scripture texts to chill and ban
The heart's fresh morning hours,
The heavy-footed Puritan
Goes trampling down the flowers;
Nor thinks of Him, who sat of old
Where Syrian lilies grew,
And from their mingling shade and gold
A holy lesson drew."

Against him, Beattie, in exquisite lines, takes the part of children, saying,

"O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms that Nature to her votary yields,
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves and garniture of fields,
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven:
O how canst thou renounce and hope to be forgiven!"

---

* Bryant.

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Impressed then with a just sense of the importance of such teaching, let us return to our little guides, and watch them at their scrutiny of what surrounds them in the visible nature.

"To the happiness of our first years," says Johnson, "nothing more seems necessary than freedom and observation. Every man may remember that he was once content with these without the superaddition of any actual pleasure. The new world is itself a banquet; and till we have exhausted the freshness of life, we have always about us sufficient qualifications. The sunshine quickens us to play, and the shade invites us to sleep."

> "With hues of genius on his cheek,
> In finest tones the youth could speak
> While he was yet a boy;
> The moon, the glory of the sun,
> And streams that murmur as they run,
> Had been his dearest joy*."

For a great deal of what occupies their elders, children care very little when they feel themselves in the midst, as Hood says, "of the realities of things, of the beauty and harmony of this joy and happiness of loving creatures, of men and women, of birds and beasts, of hills and streams, of trees and flowers, with the changes of night and day, evening and morning, summer and winter." Children can spontaneously discern "in the least and gentlest things, the greatest and sweetest intentions of nature; they cultivate those soothing, serene, and affectionate feelings, which leave them in peace with all the world," and which perhaps would furnish maturity with no needless ground for good hope of the world to come. Every thing in nature they watch and they admire, seeming "to drink in their ear Æolian murmurings and music from the thrill of spirit wings through the clear air,"

> "———————— verdant grove and all
> They wander through, oft wondering at such swell
> Of sudden exultation."

Through woods they stray at evening,

> "—— non sine vano
> Aurarum et silvæ metu."

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* Wordsworth.

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But nothing from within prevents their appreciation of the loveliness of nature,

> "——— therefore every sense of theirs
> Is made perfect in these groves.
> Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent floods,
> Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment give;
> And they will close their happy eyes
> Amid the thrush's song."

If you would oblige the young, you must act the part of that strange friend of Prospero, who says he "loved him, and show'd him all the qualities of the isle, the fresh springs, barren places, and fertile; show'd him a bird's nest, and brought him to clust'ring filberds."

> "Blackberries that grow on every bryer,
> Because they are plenty, few men do desire."

But the old poet does well to distinguish; for he could not say that few young people desire them. As a general rule, what is most common in nature is what best delights them, as if they had even learned, like a great modern observer, "to reason from frequency to beauty; that knowing a thing to be frequent, they assumed it to be beautiful, and assumed that which is most frequent to be most beautiful." And surely they are right in this judgment. "The most rare, the most common!" exclaims Madame de Sevigné, coming near to her climax of astonishment when announcing the intended marriage of the Duke de Lauzun with the Princess Henrietta of Bourbon. So it is always. From the human form to the flower it is still "the most rare, the most common!" There is not a face we pass in the street; there is not a cluster of weeds growing in any cranny of this bower, which is not divinely fashioned, delicate in some at least of its features, and admirable. Therefore, even when the violet-breathing May is come to do them service, it is still the daisy that is the child's flower, of which Chaucer says,

> "Go look upon the fresh daisie,
> And though thou be for woe at point to dye,
> That shall ful gretly ease thee of thy pine."

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The child's choice is explained too, on this very principle, by a poetess who withholds her name:—

"I'd choose to be a daisy,
If I might be a flower,
Closing my petals softly
At twilight's quiet hour;
And waking in the morning,
When falls the early dew,
To welcome heaven's bright sunshine,
And heaven's bright tear-drops, too.

"I love the gentle lily,
It is so meek and fair;
But I love daisies better,
For they grow every where.
Lilies droop always sadly,
In sunshine and in shower;
But daisies still look upward,
However dark the hour."

"There is not a girl in London," says the Spectator, "but let her have her will in going to a mask, and she shall dress as a shepherdess." The boy is often not unlike her in that respect. At times, at least, his passion might be expressed in the lines:

"Rura mihi et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes:
Flumina amem silvasque inglorius."

"It is that we have seen," as Johnson observes, "fields, and meadows, and groves from the time that our eyes opened upon life, and are pleased with birds, and brooks, and breezes, much earlier than we engage among the actions and passions of mankind. In childhood we turn our thoughts to the country, as to the region of pleasure, and of what it never of itself can yield,—peace." Children like the country, not, you may well believe, for the reason that ten country villages will enrich a lawyer more than the whole practice of a great city, nor for my lord's reason, as Pepys gives it, "that its woods are an excrescence of the earth, provided by God for the payment of debts;" nor, as many grown-up people like it, because it is the abode of that country gentleman, whom Sir Thomas Overbury defined as "a thing, out of whose corruption the generation of a justice of peace

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is produced, who speaks statutes and husbandry well enough to make his neighbours think him a wise man; who hath eloquence enough to save his twopence; whose conversation amongst his tenants is desperate, but amongst his equals full of doubt; whom nothing under a subpœna can draw to London, and who, once there, must home again, being like a dorr, that ends his flight in a dunghill." Youth likes the country for its beauty, for its poetry, for its pleasures, varying with the seasons that are so new to it, and which a mother, too, has reasons of her own for loving, as when she sings, saying,

"——————————— I greet
The months that touch with added grace
This little prattler at my knee,
In whose arch eye and speaking face
New meaning every hour I see."

Let us pause to consider the pleasure with which children regard the seasons, and which men might partly recall for their own enjoyment, by watching this juvenile delight at what ensues on each successive change.

The second act of "The Sun's Darling" seems written expressly to describe the rapture of children as each fresh period of the year offers them its pleasures. Spring comes first to them; poor spring, whom they may designate as Goody Herb-wife; but raybright, youth, health, and delight are in her company.

"Oh! 'tis merry out of doors,
On the daisy-spangled floors
Of the balmy fields and pastures in the sweet month of May;
When the heart of youth is light,
And the face of care grows bright,
And the children leap for gladness in the morning of the day."

Most persons, in fact, seem to catch in spring-time, in one respect, for a moment, the genius of our bower,

"When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing."

Children are then led by nature to the court of summer, where their joys are embittered by no jealousy. Perhaps we did not

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know before, that children are courtiers. They are though. They love that throne where summer's glories sit, and where she is beheld riding in triumph on a silver cloud. In that court they see fine buildings, noble sights, hear most ravishing music; and for refreshments, they have winds not too rough from Æolus to fan their glowing faces. In that court, every park, every ground is theirs;—not a lark that calls the morning up, shall build on any turf, but she shall be their tenant, and for her rent pay them in change of songs. They are free of the whole country, and for music, all birds sing to them. Courtly pleasures therefore are not scant,

> "For what they want in wealth they have in flowers;
> And what they lose in halls, they find in bowers."

But soon they are invited still onwards; and so nature says, "I'll bring thee to a brave and bounteous housekeeper, free autumn." "Oh, there's a lad!" they cry, "let's go thither." Then, for entertainments, autumn's bounteous green will feast them with rarities as delicate as the full growth of an abundant year can ripen to their palate. So their new host says to them,

> "On now to fresh variety of feasts;
> Princely contents are fit for princely guests."

And thou art my guest, fresh youth; thou, to buy whose state "kings would lay down their crowns." Children love autumn,

> "When temperate heat offends not with extremes,
> When day and night have their distinguishment
> With a more equal measure."

Then have they the pleasure of late returns from their walks, when the sun has set, and all the ways are darkened—

> "When fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
> And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
> Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
> And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds."

Look at little John at such a moment; look at him, and you will see how the picture is enhanced in value by his presence as regarding it. After enjoying these delights there awaits them still variety; they are invited to pass on to the court of winter,

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where their food shall not be sickly fruits, but healthful broths, strong meat and dainty. Their Humour then cries,

> "——————— leave this naked season,
> Wherein the very trees shake off their locks,
> It is so poor and barren.
> Come, let's go taste old winter's fresh delights."

Then 'tis "Welcome, story-teller! Now sit we close about this taper here." Welcome, I say, not what Lamb calls "the scientific nonsense" that would banish all the old classics of the bower, but welcome those beautiful wild tales "which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child." All the blasts now are outside the window, so needs must they go seek a fire to thaw them; they're all ice.

> "——————— reverend winter!
> We've come to be your guest; your bounteous free
> Condition does assure us we shall have
> A welcome entertainment."

Winter then will say to youth,

> "——————— I love
> To open the free treasures of my court,
> And swell your souls with my delights and sport.
> Attendance on our revels! Let delight
> Conjoin the day with sable-footed night;
> Both shall forsake their orbs, and in one sphere
> Meet in soft mirth and harmless pleasures here."

How do these changes please! While childhood lasts, with infinite delight they will run the selfsame race again. Thus do all the seasons ravish them with infinites, and lay a bounty of more sovereignty and amazement than their mortality almost can support.

Thus at each period do they feel blessed. They have not, like the common courtier, to change one weariness for another; but they change their pleasures, and can say of themselves—

> "The summer, autumn, winter, and the spring,
> As 'twere conjoin'd in one conjugal ring,
> An emblem of four provinces we sway,
> Shall all attend our pastimes night and day,

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Shall both be subject to our glorious state,
While we enjoy the blessings of our fate."

How deeply is the beauty of this picture felt in the bower generally, and what examples of its truth did we find in the children that once animated the particular One of which we are the observers! The painting speaks to my heart. Alas! it is for the memories that it awakens of those who once realized what it represents. Children, even of the upper classes, by mere nursery traditions, being in great measure exempt from the formal, unnatural rules and conventions of modern affected manners, invented to confer distinction and separate a few from the happier and wiser many, have freedom to consort with nature thus. They can see, for instance, a setting as well as a rising sun, and they can take their dinner and supper in what lovely spot they choose. In this respect they follow the hours of the court of Louis XIV.; for when describing it in the month of July, Madame de Sevigné says, "On monte à six heures en calèche —on va sur le canal dans des gondoles—on revient à dix heures." Thus little John used to enjoy his evening with the rest of them. "May," he used to say, "go and ask Nomy if we can have our tea in the garden?" Then each morning he would ask, "Going to have a ride to-day, Mary? I must hold your whip when you mount." Then he would run to meet them returning with, "How far have you been? where did you go to? Do tell me. Can't you tell me even?" Their pleasure was his pleasure. "Mary," he would say, "don't you like having a pleasant idea in the morning, and kick about,—an idea of going to High Rocks on a fine day?" Alas! those fine days are fled!

"My sprightly laddy, gone before
To that unknown and silent shore!
Shall we not meet as heretofore
Some summer morning,
When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet forewarning* ?"

* Charles Lamb.

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In autumn he loved to return home late, to see the setting sun, which in summer kept too fashionable hours for him; and, above all, he loved a walk home when—

Δύσετό τ' ἠέλιος, σκιόωντό τε πᾶσαι ἀγυιαί.

Sir Bertrand on the Woulds, at curfew hour, never felt more moved than he did at the

"——————— undescribed sounds,
That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
And wither drearily on barren moors."

He loved to be caught in rain or snow, and in winter thus to battle with the elements. It was a pleasure to him to be wet; he liked to brave "the peltings of a pitiless storm," and without flinching he would give heaven leave to "rumble its bellyful,—spit fire, or spout rain," as spitefully as it pleased.

"In education," says Hood, "we must underrate nothing, and certainly not the influence of scenery. Natural objects do materially affect the mental and moral being of men; and men are in a very eminent degree what they are made by the locality around them." Perhaps, therefore, in regard to the desire of living in beautiful places, it would be well to imitate children, and seek to cultivate their tastes, which are not repelled by art, but rather enhanced by means of what it can produce; so that still 'tis nature that they love, for if there be an art that shares with great creating nature—

"Yet nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean; so, o'er that art
Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes."

The imagination of these children and youths had been nourished by places rendered beautiful both by nature and by art. Moderately, not greatly, favoured in this respect, they had not seen Italy, they had not seen even a mountain. From their window was not beheld, as from that of Titian's house at Venice, the chain of the Tyrolese Alps, where every dawn that reddened the towers of Murano lighted also a line of pyramidal fires along

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that colossal ridge *; but they were familiar with such scenes as delight Ruskin,—the beautiful grove of aspen poplars, the fountain and the meadow,—as meet the eye of the traveller every instant on the much-despised lines of road through lowland France,—scenes to them, as well as to himself, quite exquisite in the various grouping and grace of their poplar avenues, casting sweet tremulous shadows over their level fields and labyrinthine streams. On the continent they had seen, what he ascribes to its scenery, comprising works of human art, the links unbroken between the past and present, the grey-headed wrecks suffered to stay with men, and still serve them, the building, as at St. Germain des Près and Calais Tower, of the eighth or tenth century, standing in the open street, the children playing round it, no one wondering at it, or thinking of it as separate and of another time—the ancient world, a real thing, and one with the new, all being continuous. Then they had seen smiling plains, solemn churches, the wood of Boulogne when it was wild and solitary, the forest of St. Germain, Marly, and Montague, where, like Helymus and Panopes, they all were "assueti silvis." Thomas, mounted on his little fiery charger, knew every path and pass of those woods extending to Versailles, as well as if he had been one of those king's pages that the ancient friends of his family had been in their youth, and whose adventures they used to describe to him so often with such sprightly grace that he might almost have thought that he had lived himself in those times. Then the whole party knew later Clifton with its rocks and downs; then the upland wilderness of Tunbridge Wells, where things inanimate alone are seen to smile; lastly, the Sandwich Marshes, so frequented by the strange water-fowl that Bewick copied, and the adjacent harbour with the sea roads of that town which, from the cliffs, whose sides are yearly wasted by the deep, St. Augustin's grey massive tower dominates; town of midsummer mirth if you will,—town of children and of those who in their cheerfulness resemble them, as if each thought himself again a child; but town of humanity, with all the virtues which that word implies—sorrow for the dead being one of them here by me most gratefully remembered,—town not

* Ruskin.

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deserving, like that Italian city, the epithet Superb; not proud, not ambitious, like so many others where arrogance and grandeur keep their vain melancholy state; but only an unpretending sunny place of simple and, literally, of childlike recreation for the common inhabitants of London, aspiring, like one family, after nought but air and mirth, health and freedom, "gathering shells on summer eve," ladling sand, and breasting the ocean wave. Such were the scenes familiar to the two lads that were the ornaments of our particular bower; to each of whom I would say—

"Farewell! a little time, and we
Who knew thee well, and loved thee here,
One after one shall follow thee
As pilgrims through the gate of fear,
Which opens on eternity.

"Yet shall we cherish not the less
All that is left our hearts meanwhile;
The memory of thy loveliness
Shall round our weary pathway smile,
Like moonlight when the sun has set—
A sweet and tender radiance yet.

"Thoughts of thy clear-eyed sense of duty,
Thy generous scorn of all things wrong—
The truth, the strength, the graceful beauty
Which blended in thy song.
All lovely things by thee beloved,
Shall whisper to our hearts of thee:
These green hills where thy childhood roved,
Yon river wending to the sea,
The sunset light of autumn eves
Reflecting on the deep, still floods,
Cloud, crimson sky, and trembling leaves
Of rainbow-tinted woods,—
These, in one view, shall henceforth take
A tenderer meaning for thy sake;
And all thou lov'dst of earth and sky
Seem sacred to thy memory *."

* Whittier.

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CHAPTER VI.

FARM yard in a hollow, a smiling field spangled with daisies and buttercups to play in, a pond to watch the ducks on, a shed to shelter in from a shower, a well of delicious water, with a kind girl ever willing to let you in through the wicket to quench your thirst at it; a low wall for Rose to jump over, a wooden roller to form a seat for those who want to read or work with their needle, while you are running about and jumping; what more would children have to form for them a midsummer paradise? Accordingly, hither they repair often; and here we may suppose them assembled for our next parliament; no offence, pray, but this time a sort of parliament of love.

We must not deceive you, grave and respectable stranger. There are many things connected with manners that are not taught either by example or precept in the Children's Bower. It is not thither we should repair, if we would learn certain arts that in the world are thought necessary. We have no business under these boughs, if we desire to attain the power of Middleton's witches, "to raise jars, jealousies, strifes, like a thick scurf o'er life;" to make a progress in that discipline which consists in being able to interpret words and syllables, deeds and letters, looks and accents, commissions and omissions, so as to make them ground for secret rancour, open enmity, lurking suspicion, assumed coldness, or merely indifference alone. This discipline or art is very necessary, no doubt, in some regions, though we are told "zelus et iracundia minuunt dies; et ante tempus senectam adducet cogitatus;" but, for all that, it is very much in request, and very important in the great world of life, as few need be reminded. The art of isolating one's self, another very important thing, either through a certain kind of piety or a worldly pride, is not to be acquired in the bower. This must be learned from mature grown people, though the said art has been well qualified as the sum-total of wretchedness to man; "to be cut off, to be left solitary, to have

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a world alien, not your world; all a hostile camp for you, not a country of hearts and faces who are yours, whose you are!" It is the frightfulest enchantment—man knows no sadder destiny. "How is each of us," exclaims Jean Paul, "so lonely, in the wide bosom of the all! Encased each as in his transparent ice palace, our brother is visible, but for ever unattainable." This is the state of things, for the sake of which men forsake the spirit and manners of the bower; and, for all purposes of bringing it about, the teaching here is the worst possible. But if we would fly to an opposite pole, cultivate the heart and its best affections, good humour, good feeling, and the spirit of devoted attachment; if we would invoke brighter dreams than those of first places or money-bags, and breathe an atmosphere of love and innocence not unworthy of Paradise, the sooner we come under these boughs with young people the better; and perhaps, too, after all, the longer we consort with them as companions before playing any other part, the more likely shall we be to realize elsewhere that which constitutes a happiness intended generally for our nature, and one of the most efficacious antidotes to its disorders and its woes.

From children may be learned, as we have seen in the last chapter, a love for the common things of the natural, visible world. We must now observe, that they can teach us how to love mankind in all the ordinary relations in which we may be placed with others.

"No text of the sacred Scripture," says St. Augustin, "retains in its exposition the sense of the Holy Ghost, unless it conduces to charity *." Grown-up people, for all that, are often unable to find any one to love around them; they fancy that we should never think of being friends with heaven, till we have quarrelled with all the world. For them heaven alone, they tell us, is bright. But they should be referred to what a great author observes on a subject very analogous. "The simple fact," says Ruskin, whose words bear application to the object in our view, "that the sky is brighter than the earth, is not a precious truth unless the earth itself be first understood. Despise the earth, or slander it; fix your eyes on its gloom, and forget its

* De Doct. Ch.

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loveliness; and we do not thank you for your languid or despairing perception of the brightness of heaven. But rise up actively on the earth, learn what there is in it, know its colour and form, and the full measure and make of it, and if after that you can say, 'Heaven is bright,' it will be a precious truth, but not till then. Giovanni Bellini knows the earth well; paints it to the full; and to the smallest fig-leaf and falling flower, blue hill and white-walled city, glittering robe and golden hair; to each he will give its lustre and loveliness; and then, so far as with his poor human lips he may declare it, far beyond all these, he proclaims that 'Heaven is bright.' But Gaspar, and such other landscapists, painting all nature's flowery ground as one barrenness, and all her foliage as one blackness, and all her exquisite forms as one bluntness; when, in this sluggard gloom, and sullen treachery of heart, they mutter their miserable attestation to what others had long ago discerned for them—the sky's brightness, we do not thank them." Applying these words to the world of men and women in which we live, their author seems to be no less excellent as a representative of the bower's philosophy, than an acute artist. People who find nothing visible to love around them, are the last we should listen to when praising what is invisible above them; for, after all, the truth is, that human life has a childish and innocent side belonging to it, which ought to be loved. That side is an objective reality, as Germans might say, and not in the least depending on any subjective speculations. The young see it, as they are quick to see what is without them, and they feel accordingly; and let me tell you, good bearded man, or cautious matron, if you can walk on a warm pleasant day down any road out of London, as from Kensington to Hammersmith, and not see that side of life,—for all your beard or for all your prudence, you are to be pitied for your infirmity rather than admired for your wisdom. But think of it as you will, please to remember that "you live," as says Augustin, "in the union and society of all men; that he who has been formed by the same hand that made you, is your brother and your companion *." Love and treat him then as such. Plato, even, says that

* In Ps. lvii.

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there is no greater good to a state, than for persons to be the acquaintances of each other; since, where the manners of each are not known, distrust and even injustice will be generated *. Be that as it may, no where is the truth expressed by St. Augustin so instinctively felt and acted on with such consistency as in the Bower of Children. They find something to love in every one, and they even carry their affectionate disposition to things inanimate, as when they prefer a broken toy to a new one, and ask leave to carry it with them if they have to change their residence. Thus when John was dying, he left his wooden horse with only three legs to the care of his little sister, saying, "Place him there now till I get well." His secret might have been expressed in the lines of the poet,—

"I love the memory of the past, its pressed yet fragrant flowers;
The moss that clothes its broken walls, the ivy on its towers;
Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed, my eyes grow moist and dim,
To think of all the vanished joys that danced around its brim."

Such traits may be noticed here, as indicating what would be thought in the bower of forsaking the fallen, of shunning the unfortunate, and of rejecting all claims but those of prosperity and success.

Love is the soul of children. They are not hiding-wells of wrath and gloom, on which no sunshine settles; they have no hostile feelings, no enmity, much less rancour. From the eldest of these boys here with us in the bower, we might learn to see the beauty of that disposition commemorated in the catacombs, as belonging to the first Christians, where we read on tombs "amicus omnium, amator pauperum." Poor youth! I am not going to make him out a moral philosopher. I know the flaws that could be found in him by "a sedate thinking villain, whose black blood runs temperately bad." I know that many of his qualities were what the schoolmen term "virtutes minus splendidæ, et hominis et terræ nimis participes;" though, for all that, there be some, as Phebe says, "had they mark'd him in parcels as I did, would have gone

* De Leg. v.

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near to fall in love with him." But mark this. Many might learn from him, through admiration for the character with which the loving disposition has invested him, never to harbour malignant and private spite against any one, under the disguise of a due regard to what they owed to themselves; to know not under a sober form what it is to hide offence, and nourish ill will; we might learn from him the art of never having any one to forgive, of keeping inviolable, ay, and chivalrous, friendship, with all with whom we have ever been associated as companions. If this youth, so quick to discover virtues in another, however slightly sketched, were told that he had been cheated by some one, whose utmost honesty is good fellowship, and who speaks northern what countryman soever,—who, if he did not cozen him directly, yet any ostler within ten miles, that should be brought upon his book-oath, will affirm that he had laid a bait for him,—he would be slow to credit the accusation; and, at the very worst, he would stoutly maintain that the wrong was never maliciously intended, ending like the young prince, "God keep me from false friends! But they were none." Not that he wanted discrimination, or had any thing morbid in his nature. Describe a villain to him, and he would say like Montrose,

> "——— I ne'er heard
> Of such a cursed nature; if long-lived,
> He would infect mankind: rest you assured,
> He finds from me small courtesy;"

but that he saw excuses, virtues, merits, where others closed their eyes not to see them. As for putting on a cold repelling look, on grounds of vague dislike, it was an art he could not learn. No one ever saw him angry, or, like the Homeric hero, *ὑπόδρα ἰδών*. "He was of a different stuff," as the Duc de Saint-Simon says of some one. Sprightly, hot, eager, even passionate for a sweet idea, or, as some might qualify it, for a whim of youth,—for what grown-up people would often deem an injury, for rancour or revenge, heaven had made him unlike most others, chafeless. If an injurious word had been uttered, he would have answered like Frank Forest, in the old play by Heywood:

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"Come, I dare swear
'Twas not your malice, and I take it so.
Let's frame some other talk."

He was in general one so truly mannered that he could enchant societies unto him, and half all men's hearts were his. Perhaps he was "too forward to find out virtue where it never settled." If so, it must be for others to blame him. "Poor fellow! he had his faults," such persons would very condescendingly say, alluding to these traits of his boyish character. I wonder what their own faults were?

Certainly, if these were follies, they were within him, and they shined through him; that not an eye that saw him but was a physician, to comment on his malady.

In the world, with your grown-up people, disguise it as they will, it is often less the genius of love that reigns, than the spirit of rancour or of anger, as if arising from a feeling that they are more sinned against than sinning. And yet what a want of judgment do they evince in this! The real fact is, that few men are more sinned against than sinning. For my part, I know at least one person intimately, who is not without a just "hatred for human scoundrels," and yet he cannot charge his memory with a single instance in which he does not find an excuse for those who injured him, seeking to benefit themselves unconsciously at his expense. But it seems as if when many men grow up, and above all, as they decline in years, they often become more and more impatient, irascible, and angry with mankind. "Spiritum ad irascendum facilem quis potuerit sustinere?" Strange destiny of people of bad humour! There is nothing in the world that is not for them hedged with thorns, and they feel hurt by whatever touches or approaches them. In the kindest civilities, and even in benefits and favours, they feel something that wounds them. What you say to please them, is precisely that which offends them and causes their complaints. Your most respectful words are sparks which fall on their tinder: you will see them suddenly out of themselves, because their caprice has discovered in your words or in your eyes something equivocal, which it does not understand. Children, like the common people, take every thing as it comes, with a good grace. Their careless smiles seem invin-

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cible. Children, too, resemble the lower orders in making friends with each other at first sight. This was seen verified in the eldest of these boys. No one was ever more warmly animated with the desire of obliging others. He was what we might call one of nature's freemasons. He had those secret ways of revealing himself to the manly and the generous, which are all over the world equally intelligible. In France he was a bon camerade with the soldiers of the camp; on the roads the drivers and postilions greeted him as a sworn brother; and when he used to meet them afterwards you would see with what pleasant looks and hearty salutations they used to accost him. As he would always sit outside in travelling, he had more opportunity for observing these joyous chirping fellows, and of having a little chit-chat with them at each change of horses. One day, between Beauvais and Paris, meeting a French carriage, the postilions of both sides arranged to change, and I remember his being greatly pleased to hear the lady who was in that carriage say, with a most gentle voice, to her postilion as she left, "Ah, mon enfant, descendez doucement." It was as if he thanked her for speaking kindly to himself: in fact, he would often play as being one of them, cantering away as happy and as perpendicular as a prince. With him a genuine look and air in any one determined the matter at once in his favour. "Philosophers," as Sterne says, "with all their ethics have never considered this affinity rightly." How should this lad consider it at all? He did not in the least. And so you would often find him with some strange companion or other at his elbow. But apropos of the French soldiers, I cannot resist the temptation of relating a pleasant anecdote. To visit the camp, a certain good man, loved by every one for his rare simplicity, who had been a professor, but who had since married the daughter of an epicier, desired to be allowed to accompany his former pupil. Tom, ever enchanted to oblige any one, was of course pleased at the proposal. So off we rode, and on arriving fell in with a party of officers. To become one of themselves was with this English lad the affair of a moment. Already they had been seven years acquainted. Then there was chatting and describing, and inquiring, and giving short pithy replies, and mutual exchange of thoughts, and, in short,

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foundation for an eternal brotherhood. When, lo! all of a sudden, and apropos of nothing, our brave companion pulls me out a card, and addressing one of his countrymen, assured him that he would be happy to supply brandy and some fifty things else to the troop. Here was a fall from the altitudes of French and English chivalry! Well, the good-humoured youth, however stunned, never lost his stirrups for an instant; the shock seemed only to give him fresh mettle, and it was easy to see that the French heroes were as much amused as himself, without having their first impressions respecting the quality of their visitor in the least altered by the untoward display of his companion's business-like discretion. But wherever he found himself it was the same. He knew familiarly all who had any quality to recommend them, whatever might be their condition. He was above all fears of "derogation;" and that this disposition was not thrown away on others appeared at his death. The riding-master, whose name the Duc de Saint-Simon would have chronicled, was inconsolable when he was told of it. Hearing a man say that the deceased had once promised him a shilling, he threw one at him, saying, "Take it, and if it were five pounds that he owed you I'd fling at you thus." Then at night he came, as it were, by stealth, and helped to place him in the coffin. A poor woman fell sick on hearing of his death, and remained for several days in bed. Another woman a month after his death, seeing his portrait, burst into tears, and continued weeping for a long time, unable to return to the room in which she unexpectedly saw it. The friendliness of his disposition was therefore repaid by the affection of those who had observed it; and that is another lesson which may not prove useless to grown-up people. But children, and indeed the young generally, are all thus generous and confiding. They divide their fruit, though they have only one bunch of currants, while old ones are winking at each other, and laughing at them for it. Each to the fresh comers, quite unconsciously, is "my dear" in an instant. When a visitor arrives at their father's house, it is they, above all, whose hospitality from first to last is warm-hearted, one might almost say Biblical, as when the Levite heard, "Comfort thy heart and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry." What greetings does he receive

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from them! How they pull him about amongst them, saying, perhaps, like Shallow, "Nay, you shall see our orchard; I will not excuse you; you shall not be excused; excuse shall not be admitted; there is no excuse shall serve; you shall not be excused." At table their toasts, when they would mimic their elders, are to their grand patron called Good-fellowship; whose livery all the little people hereabout are clad in; and their last is, Health and joy to all the world.

"Charity, though supernatural, does not exclude," says Gerson, "natural motives for loving, which contribute to the consolation of the faithful, and of all men *." Describing the manners of the French in not very distant times, a traveller on the banks of the Loire ascribes to the grown-up persons of that country, of even high life, this charming trait of the youthful character, and which with us only belongs to children and the common people. His party falling in with some company from a chateau, near Ancennis, are invited to a dance and supper for the evening, and on their declining the invitation, tokens of friendship were exchanged, the gentlemen shaking hands, and the ladies embracing each other. "Who are these ladies?" demanded the foreigner. "You know them as well as we do," replied one of his French companions. It is to general advantage to be pleased and to please. "But you embraced them, as if you really felt an affection for them." "And I did feel that affection for them," said she; "as long as I was with them I would have done them every service in my power, and would even have made sacrifices to serve them." "And yet if you were to see them again, you would perhaps not know them." "Very possibly," replied she; "we are transient, but not insincere †."

Children have a sort of natural disposition to love, which is no doubt a trace of the original perfection of our nature; and in truth, the observer is tempted at moments to ask, on seeing proofs of it,

"———— can I want
Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such smiles?"

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* Trilogium Astrologiæ Theologizatæ.

† L. Hunt, Book for a Corner.

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Goldsmith represents it even as forestalling charity—

> "Careless his merits or his faults to scan,
> Their pity gave ere charity began."

When little John heard of quarrels, or observed coolness between others, he used to whisper afterwards, with a sigh to his sister, "Well, we have our purgatory here."

The young then, on the whole, have a disposition to like all others who live near them, and who walk the same streets or fields. They want companions. Nothing is sweet without them. Let men try to imitate them in this respect, and their happiness is almost made. For mark the sublime and practical lesson that follows from this habit. They love those whose faces they know, who are in the same town or suburb; they watch them and admire them. Well, but down the road a little way, there are others just as worthy of their regard; and further still, twenty miles, or an hundred miles off, it is still the same family; and then cross the seas in imagination—repair to Paris, there too are the same good boys, and the same kind friendly faces in maturity and age. Now they cannot enjoy familiarity with these. It is for themselves the same as if these others did not exist. What is to be done? Why turn to the source of all such feelings; love them all in God, ever present, and hope to be companions with them in indissoluble union for the eternal years.

But it is not alone that we can learn in the bower to admire manifestations of such childish friendliness towards all men; we may be taught by its examples, as I have already suggested speaking of our Tom, the practice of that old knightly friendship, with all its fervour, delicacy, honour, and consideration, which was the glory and the consolation of the heroic times, when, if a human heart had been dissected, it would have been found, as some one says in an old play, "a thing framed with divers corners, into every one of which a man may entertain a friend." "We must be friends," say the young. "Well," replies the Père Boutauld, "it is necessary for us to be loved. The succours which you can derive from those who love you are almost as many as you have days to live. Among these days, says the wise man, some will be days of labour, others

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days of rest; some days of fear, of danger, of calamity, of despair; others days of hope, of success, and of prosperity; but all these days, without any distinction, will be days of affliction when you are alone; and when friends are with you, days of consolation and of happiness *." Oh! let no one slight this great gift. Ah me! there are many who can exclaim with poor Marina,—

> "This world to me is like a lasting storm,
> Whirring me from my friends."

From the young, too, who from all that is really vulgar instinctively recoil, men can learn to be not exacting or overnice in regard even to the choice of persons. They observe the rules of kind feeling suggested by the Père Boutauld. "It is no great virtue," he says, "to love persons for the splendour of their fortune, or for the great qualities of their nature and intelligence. But believe that the immense grandeur of a noble soul consists in loving truly those who love us, whatever be their humour or condition †." Such was the spirit of friendship in our Thomas, who was of a disposition most capable of it, with all its fidelity. For a lad of his age he had, it must be confessed, some singular friends, whom it was no great merit to love and honour; the Bishop of Nancy, Forbin de Janson, the Archbishop of Paris, a personal friend of Louis XVI., an ancient diplomatist who loved him as his son, and venerable abbés without end, all men of singular nobleness of character, who supplied the place of those whom his birth would have given him, if religious differences, in spite of him, had not interposed. But for others of his own making, he did not pique himself on being impartial. He obeyed his impetuous way of feeling; the knave, if you would choose to call him such, was his honest friend, and he prayed you to countenance him. But, indeed, no little air or word of kindness, come from what quarter it might, was ever lost upon him. For the most common regards of civility he testified gratitude; and the delicacy, the promptitude, the anxiety, and the affection with which he sought to return them, furnished an example from which many in our aristocratic circles might have found much

* Les Conseilles de la Sagesse. † Ib.

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to learn. If all his countrymen resembled him in that respect, England would be as much loved on the Continent as she is admired.

Friend was a name in former times that, as a poet said,

> "Virtue can only answer to.
> Indulgent parents, brethren, kindred, tied
> By the natural flow of blood alliances,
> And what you can imagine, is too light
> To weigh with name of friend: they execute
> At best but what a nature prompts them to;
> Are often less than friends, when they remain
> Our kinsmen still; but friend is never lost."

It is melancholy, it is in fact really curious, as offering a phenominal attribute of modern life, which one may contemplate with scientific astonishment, to consider how little friendship of this character exists in certain ranks of society in some countries at the present day, where each one every year likes to seek new purses and stranger companies through indifference to old ties. You might, without being at all unfair, apply to certain capitals the words of Seneca, and say to each fresh visitor, Believe "venire te in locum hominibus plenum amicis vacuum." Oh! what's become of the true hearty love was wont to be 'mongst neighbours in old time? What's become of the manly, Christian friendship that could be found even at the court of Louis XIV., and of which the Duc de Saint-Simon furnished so striking an example, in his own conduct towards the Duc d'Orleans? It is disagreeable to have to point to our own metropolis; but how seldom in the higher or graver classes do friends there meet merely as such, or care to meet merely as such, even though it was to minister to the mourner consolation which the simplest dictate of humanity demands! There you see disproved the maxim of the old man of Terence,—"Proximus amicorum gradus est vicinitas." "I have many acquaintance," says Farquhar, "but no friend; I mean in the old romantic way." He need not have put on such a dismal face painting his own portrait. I should like to know who in the same kind of world in that respect was better off. It is different in the bower; there's where you must come if you want to find the old friendship, the φίλον ἑταῖρον. There, under those boughs, you arrive

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in a place full of friends, yes, of myrmidons if you will, but of warm-hearted, devoted, constant, and chivalrous friends, though it may be as well, perhaps, not to ask how many full-grown men as chance visitors are in it, till they can find an excuse to move elsewhere. "By the rights of our fellowship," exclaims Hamlet, invoking the friendship of Rosencrantz, "by the consonancy of our youth!" To how many little guests and hosts might we address the lines

> "——— So now good night, arch friend,
> Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!"

There are persons so constituted, that the longer they know any one the less they like him. It suffices to have lived with them in any capacity a certain number of years, to be set down in their estimation as being possessed of all the faults that flesh is heir to. No doubt they have had time to study you; but still such impressions are at total variance with those produced in the bower. "Friendship," as Overbury says, "these grown-up people account but a word without any signification; nay, they love all the world so little, that, an it were possible, they would make themselves their own executors; and for neighbourhood, you were better dwell by a contentious lawyer." Such persons might learn from children to adopt views and manners that would even make themselves much happier; for what a thing it is to pass one's life without loving those around one! The love and friendship that we learn in the Children's Bower are not like that affection which never discovers the good qualities of another till he has passed away for ever. Oh, how much have many persons, and even perhaps parents, to learn in this respect from children and youth! Alas! we embitter the lives of those dear to us, and then lament them when they are dead.

> "Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,
> Destroy our friends, and after weep their dust."

It must be afflicting to some people to think, how it was not until after the death of their friends that they learned to appreciate their virtue. While with them we could see only their faults. But when we have lost them, the idea of their character, as Shakspeare's friar says, will sweetly creep

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> "Into our study of imagination;
> And every lovely organ of their life
> Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
> More moving delicate, and full of life,
> Into the eye and prospect of our soul,
> Than when they liv'd indeed."

Yet, even then, such late lovers cannot recognize their fault without incurring fresh debts to the living, and so providing future regrets for themselves; for in praising too late what they have lost, they mingle with their eulogiums reproaches of those who yet remain to them, like Priam, after Hector's death, calling his surviving sons wicked, *κακὰ τέκνα*, and saying that the worst only are left to him—

ψεῦσταί τ' ὀρχησταί τε χοροὶ τυπίῃσιν ἄριστοι,

while these poor singers and dancers have at least the grace to hear his abuse in meek silence, and to obey his orders.

We have already gathered many very important lessons on this subject of affection from the Children's Bower. It concerns us not a little in many capacities to know how to love as men other men, as Christians other Christians, and our friends; for even if we look alone to earth, "gaudium nisi de amore nullum esse potest," as Gerson says, after citing with approval the proverb of his day and nation, that "jamais homme n'en aura joye si d'amour ne vient*." But if grave people who "hate love for the name's sake," while selfish people "hate it for their own," will pardon an allusion to "a soul feminine," there is yet another part that many of us have to play in life which cannot, perhaps, be conned in any place with such advantage as in this very bower, where we are presented with examples of noble, disinterested, and devoted affection: it is that of lovers in the common acceptation of the word. Here, if you will, you may bid the young rovers scamper about and play; though they won't understand us if they remain; but whether we send them off or not, those who have followed them under these branches, who are sometimes in sufficient want of the particular lesson to which our attention should be directed, can with great propriety

* Sympsalma super Cant. Cantic.

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be invited, in accordance with our general purpose, to observe that by studying the disposition of those whose unfledged days unfit them for such considerations, they may best learn how to conduct themselves in regard to a matter which may very intimately concern them, both in relation to their own character and to their happiness. Yes, there will be some lookers-on ready to say even here with the poet—

> "Give me then, since Heaven has shown
> It was not good to be alone,
> A partner suited to my mind,
> Solitary, pleased, and kind;
> Who, partially, may something see
> Preferr'd to all the world in me;
> When but two the earth possest,
> 'Twas their happiest days and best;
> They from each other ne'er were drawn,
> But in some grove or flow'ry lawn
> Spent the swiftly flying time,
> Spent their own and nature's prime
> In love, that only passion given
> To perfect man, whilst friends with Heaven."

No one here, it may well be believed, is going to speak of the "fatuus amator" against whom Gerson * thundered,—the betrayer of women whom Dante places in the first of the ten circles into which is divided the nethermost hell; but, on the other hand, no one will seek to incur the censure of the same grave monitor by disparaging those who play a gentle and a manly part, and, "though clerkes prayse wommen but a lite," worthy of commendation, not reproof; and if it be, as he says, "no joke" to praise what is wrong, neither is it the office of a rational gravity to disseminate falsehood under any form, however stately; and, as Evelyn says, "though there were nothing more worthy of eulogies than the grace which is generally contrasted with love, still there is neither sense nor merit in affecting to forget that this very quality itself, as well as every thing else that will be found to people heaven, is neither more nor less than its result." If you eliminate it altogether, the whole

* Tractat. cont. Romantium de Rosa.

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earth, as he reminds the celebrated Robert Boyle, "is but a desert." And as for those who will snarl at an allusion to it at all, under any circumstances, I wish they would learn wisdom from a great author, who says, "I was never able to conquer any one single bad sensation in my heart so decisively as by beating up as fast as I could for some kindly and gentle sensation, to fight it upon its own ground." Without any impropriety even here one may contrast what is generous and noble with what is simply base, if there be a single amiable attribute of the bower sacrificed to it, and in reference to the former say, that if nurtured as it ought to be, "This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath, may prove a beauteous flower;" for here persons may acquire those qualities which can render them worthy of that love which already in the affection of women for them has been the guardian of their own early years, and which may now be waiting in another form, from the same kindly source, to crown it. Woman is first known to them as one so benign and gracious, "that ech hir loveth that lookith in her face." The tendencies of modern education, withdrawing persons from the bower, are to deprive them of the early associations from seeing that face. They are placed rather with the selfish, the stubborn, and the ugly; and perhaps there is no great cause for rejoicing at the general results. Aspatia can partly teach us why when saying—

> "There is a vile dishonest trick in man
> More than in woman. All the men I meet
> Appear thus to me; are all harsh and rude;
> And have a subtlety in every thing,
> Which love could never know. But we fond women
> Harbour the easiest and the smoothest thoughts,
> And think all shall go so? It is unjust
> That men and women should be match'd together."

But let a young man or woman only retain the spirit of the bower, and this discord between them will be quelled. Then when the time comes for him to think that the larkspurs are listening for his lady's foot, his manner "will be an heven for to see to eny woman, were sche never so wys;" while, as Benedick says, in his light way, "Leander the good swimmer,

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Troilus, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-knights, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, were never more true lovers" than his poor self. Then are there found those that may say—

> "We'll live together like two wanton vines,
> Circling our souls and loves in one another;
> We'll spring together, and we'll bear one fruit;
> One joy shall make us smile, and one grief mourn,
> One age go with us, and one hour of death
> Shall close our eyes, and one grave make us happy."

But it is the knowledge of the selfish world, and premature corruption, which spoil all. The pride of life knows no lovers. Ambition knows them not. The spirit of luxury knows them not. Social emulation knows them not. Neither is the more subtle pride of great intellectual eminence an atmosphere that favours the development of this element of joy and virtue in the human character. Many of the philosophers had not an ideal of love more elevated than what is ascribed to some modern men of gravity, however they came by it. "That whole thing," says Cicero, "which is commonly called love, is of such levity that I see nothing that can be compared to it; and yet this author of levity and flagitiousness is placed by poets in the councils of the gods*." These philosophers were incapable of comprehending a poet who should say—

> "In female breasts where sense and merit rule,
> The lover's mind need ask no other school;
> Shamed into sense—the scholars of their eyes,
> Our beaux from gallantry might soon be wise;
> Will gladly light, their homage to improve,
> The lamp of knowledge at the torch of love."

Cicero speaks of philosophers who praise those who die with an equal mind, but who blame those who cannot bear the death of another with an equal mind, as if, he says, explaining their censure, "it were possible, as we read in amatory language, that any one could love another more than himself†." The spirit of love within the Children's Bower would send such men

* Tuscul. iv. † Ib. iii.

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to learn from flowers a more just and tender thought; for as a late author remarks, "the male and female flowers of the water-lily called 'Valisneria' appear on separate plants; the latter blooming on the surface of the water, while the former tears its roots from the soil to blossom and to die beside it." A mind at variance with what in its elements might be learned from the bower, will not admit of those fine touches which are required to form the lover, whose looks are so humble, and yet so noble, that they aim to tell some one that he could with pride die at her feet, though he scorned slavery any where else. Of one of the greatest poets of modern times an admiring biographer, apparently citing the opinion of De Quincey, says, "I take it upon myself to affirm that he had not the feelings within him which make a total devotion to a woman possible. There never lived a woman whom he would not have lectured and admonished under circumstances that should have seemed to require it; nor would he have conversed with her in any mood whatever without wearing an air of mild condescension to her understanding. He never could in any emphatic sense have been a lover. He never could have laid aside his own nature sufficiently to have played such a part. Looking down even upon the lady of his heart, as upon the rest of the world, from the eminence of his own intellectual superiority, he would have viewed her as a child, and perhaps might have bid her hold her tongue if she assumed any of the haughty grace of maidenly pride." His lesson would be some such nonsense as is conveyed in these lines—

> "Then crouch no more on suppliant knee,
> But scorn with scorn outbrave;
> A Briton, even in love, should be
> A subject, not a slave."

A spirit of this kind, however it may have dictated talk about children, can hardly have been at any time, on this subject at least, congenial with that of the bower, where the young, "seeing in each woman a brief of womankind," are prepared by their disposition for being both in lordeschip and servage servants in love, and lordes in marriage, when eventually possessing one who proves to them, like Eve before her fall, all the world of woman. Their genius tends to fashion the character

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in later life of that St. Hermas, whose remembrance of the young maiden slave at Rome, whom he loved and admired, thinking with himself how happy he should be if he had such a wife, both for beauty and manners, and thinking how noble and beautiful that creature of God was, enters into the vision of "the Shepherd," with which he enriched the earliest Christian literature. In a word, the genius of the bower is not antagonistic, but harmonious with that of the bard of nature, of whom another poet says,

"Nor less the kindred power he felt;
That love of all things human,
Whereof the fiery centre is
The love man bears to woman.

"He sang the dignity of man,
Sang woman's grace and goodness;
Pass'd by the world's half-truths, her lies
Pierced through with lancelike shrewdness.

"Upon life's broad highways he stood,
And aped nor Greek nor Roman;
But snatch'd from heaven Promethean fire
To glorify things common *."

"To be capable of loving one is better than to possess a thousand," says Heartfree; and this power may often be traced back to early influences, as when it is suggested that perhaps the purity and singleness of one celebrated lover, and his exclusion of all images but one, resulted from the localities by which his heart in early life had been moulded, when he was conversant with gushing springs and solitary vales. The harmonious affections, the ardour to oblige, to serve, and to defend, the deep sense of duty, the delicate and unflinching honour, which are elements in the atmosphere of this earliest bower, endeared to young hearts, form no bad study for those who, in later youth, have need of what is vital in their new relations. For passions which are not guarded with such thoughts make no one happy.

"There is no faith in them, but baits of arts;
'Tis virtuous love keeps clear contracted hearts."

* Aubrey de Vere.

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The world, then, too, in fine, might learn, from a remembrance of what inspires the Children's Bower, not to chase from earth the genius of love by conventional isolations, to which thousands are yearly sacrificed with barbarous insensibility, by formalities, delays, and disappointments, by proposing a union of goods and estates, instead of a union of hearts and minds, by discountenancing as folly, or prohibiting as a violation of social order, as in France under what is called the "ancien régime*," all considerations of youth, virtue, grace, and beauty, with all the moral elevations from which it springs, by suffering projects of ambition to sway the destiny of children; as when the Maréchal de Montmorency and Mlle. de Piennes, in the time of Henry II., had no defence against the whole of the regal and paternal authority combined against them, but their love and their honour; the history of whose regrets, as Saint-Simon says, "is so affecting, while it does such little honour to those who employed it against them†." There was a time previous to the epoch of that social state, when disinterestedness and generosity were thought essential to a lover, when rich honesty was known to dwell often like a miser in a poor house, as your pearl in your foul oyster. This argument might then with some have had much weight. That was a time when even in Spain, the land of formal etiquette, and even at the court, the scene of ambition, the remaining with one's hat on, though in presence of the king or queen, like a grandee of the first class, a cardinal, or an ambassador, was permitted or tolerated, without any other right to such a privilege but what was obtained from the mere fact of conversing at the moment with the person one loved, in whose company it was supposed one could not be expected to regard even majesty itself‡. The ideas of that time, which seem, in this respect at least, so childlike, in admitting of such an excuse for apparent forgetfulness of all respect, and absence of mind, have been succeeded by notions that seem to allow of no one being absent from himself through love of another, and to condemn all shame but that of being thought capable of losing egotism through a disinterested attachment. Now, therefore, that all

* De Tocqueville, l'Ancien Régime, p. 151.

† T. xiv. 330. ‡ Mém. de St.-Simon, iii. 274.

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youthful qualities are to be unlearned previous to a union, and as prelude to a settlement,—now that there is not even any king's exchequer ready to receive the money of some Alicia, "ut possit se maritare cui voluerit," and no papal power, as that of St. Calixtus, to awe this conventional tyranny, more effective than the old laws Julia and Papia, and enable noble maidens to marry whom they like,—now that to all ears you can "match Cowley in softness, o'ertop Milton in sublime, and banter Cicero in eloquence, by the help of that most ingenious society called the Bank of England," we cannot wonder if, as the poet represents him, the genius itself, of which we speak, waving his youthful pinions, should leave the world through repugnance for the company he finds in it, and fly back to those ethereal mansions from which he originally descended.

All this, however, perhaps may be mere digression from our purpose; but

> "Love will venture in
> Where it dare not well be seen;"

and the worst that can happen is that this glimpse may cause a chance visitor to the bower, some one, like Sir Roger de Coverley, to appear for half an hour more jocund than usual. We may quit this ground "prepared," as some one says, "to think very ill of any person who thinks we have said too much of it." One thing, at all events, agrees well with this place,—the tenderness of a last farewell; and having cited the lines, we can pass on to what may be listened to by all:

> "Be green for aye, green bank and brae,
> Around Montgomery's castle!
> Blow there, ye earliest flowers! and there
> Ye sweetest song-birds nestle!
> For there was ta'en that last farewell
> In hope, indulged how blindly!
> And there was given that long last gaze
> 'That dwelt' on him 'sae kindly.'
>
> "Ah, cease!—she died. He too is dead.
> Of all her girlish graces
> Perhaps one nameless lock remains,
> The rest stern time effaces.

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Dust lost in dust. Not so: a bloom
Is hers that ne'er can wither;
And in that lay which lives for aye
The twain live on together *."

But now, having called back the children, let us proceed to consider what else may be learned respecting the culture of the affections from the manners of the bower. Coming to speak of home and of the family, we shall be presented with a charming spectacle that need fear no audience; for here will be seen such a winnowed purity in love, that we may fearlessly demand of innocence herself, which in each young one will be present to scan it, "What too curious dreg espies my sweet lady in the fountain of their love?"

Another development, then, of the affectionate disposition to be learned from children, and one, too, not wholly inappropriate to later life, is the love of home and of kindred, love for the dwelling and its associations, for the family and for all belonging to it.

The anxiety to see the world, so natural to youth, and even childhood, requires, no doubt, scope and freedom for its exercise. Consequently young people every day like to be off in one direction or another, though it were only to walk in streets and saunter before shops; while generally, perhaps, as we before remarked, loving the country above all. But however far or often they may stray from it, their hearts are always in their home. Now, in this respect, have not many grown-up persons much to learn from them? "What do we observe in men?" asks the Père Boutauld. "There are three sorts of persons," he continues, "who are parts of ourselves,—our family, our intimate friends, and, above them all, our Creator and our God; but grown-up people pass whole days far from these precious parts of themselves. From morning till evening they live surrounded with strangers, often with those who worry and distract them. What is this but banishment? Children love home. They love, without talking of it, to walk with parents, brothers, sisters, friends, and alone, that is, sweetly, secretly, with God. They say to their brothers and companions,

* Aubrey de Vere.

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'alter alteri theatrum sumus,' I am your theatre, you are mine. 'Ubi omnia nisi tu? sed quid omnia sine te?' as a Roman senator said, writing to his wife *."

Richter describes home as "a focus of love." One glance suffices to show how all in the bower enter into the joys and sorrows of their home, and how their hearts, even while in heaven, are there. In Christian houses, where the bower is suffered to exist, which of course is not always the case, that discipline of which Cicero speaks is not needed. He says that mothers and masters are accustomed to chastise, not alone with words, but also with stripes, boys and children who are merry amidst the grief of the family, and to oblige them on such occasions to weep whether they will or no. This is what they do "si quid in domestico luctu hilarius ab iis factum est aut dictum †." Home is kept home by children and by women; for let one of the former be ever so wayward,

> "Woman, with looks that can charm and enchain,
> Lureth back at her beck the wild truant again ‡."

Man's education cannot be perfected without that love of home which involves the influence of woman. For "she calls his spirit back when she uses her own natural force, winning him from misanthropy, and scepticism, and despair. She teaches him the weakness of merely intellectual strength; she compels him to distrust himself, even while she invites him to repose on himself with more confidence; without her the affections sleep, and the eye refuses to look on objects from that point of vision whence their most healthful and invigorating aspects are cast."

> "Guided thus, how passing lovely
> Is the track of woman's feet!
> And her brief and simple record
> How serenely sweet!
>
> "O'er life's humblest duties throwing
> Light the earthling never knew,
> Freshening all its dark waste places
> As with Hermon's dew.

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* Les Conseilles de la Sagesse.

† Tusc. iii.

‡ Schiller.

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"Not a vein of cold ideal,
Not a poet's dream alone,
But a presence warm and real,
Seen, and felt, and known *."

Would you know the value of what in this respect can be learned in the Children's Bower? Observe the consequences of wanting woman's influence as contributing to the sweets and innocence of home; for it is needless to remark, that the bower exists not where there is no home. Ah! you may educate children well for some vain purposes of ambiguous results by sending them far from the bower. In truth, its atmosphere but ill agrees with the scenes you wish to fit them for, and with the acquirements you expect them to possess. Those who come from the selfish, ambitious, and luxurious haunts of an unhappy class of mortals, can hardly breathe it. They will prefer for those they think they love that "schoolboy society, so frivolous," as De Quincey says when contrasting it with the society illumined by woman's presence, "in the matter of its disputes, often so brutal in the manner; so childish, and yet so remote from simplicity; so foolishly careless, and yet so revoltingly selfish; dedicated ostensibly to learning, and yet beyond any section of human beings so conspicuously ignorant †." Moreover, on the other hand, you may achieve malso any grave-sounding purposes besides the happiness of children by escorting them elsewhere, barring their mothers from them, and setting bounds between their love and those from whom they sprung, as if they were authors of themselves, and knew no other kin. You may practise, with success of a certain kind, the cruelty that Elia complains of, and separate poor lads and lasses from their early homesteads; but it may be a great question whether, by suppressing the bower, you can educate them well, at least for both the present and the future life; ay, for that future existence where innocence will be greatness, goodness, glory; and, after all, love, with just the natural sweets that belong to our common humanity, only become more intense from being purified and transfigured,—perfection.

Even in a practical and half-earthly point of view a great

* Whittier. † Autob. i. 365.

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deal, I believe, might be alleged to prove the importance of the bower and its homely spirit to form the mind and secure the happiness of that very sex from which it derives so great a charm. "We find," says a living author, "beauty itself a very poor thing unless beautified by sentiment. We cannot (and that is the plain truth) think the most beautiful creature beautiful, or be at all affected by her, or long to sit next her, or listen to a concert with her, or walk in a field or a forest with her, or call her by her Christian name, or ask her if she like poetry, or tie her gown for her, or be asked whether we admire her shoe, or take her arm even into a dining-room, or dream of her, or wake thinking of her, or feel a want in the room when she has gone, or a pleasure the more when she appears,—unless she has a heart as well as a face, and is a proper, good-tempered, natural, sincere, honest girl, who has a love for other people and other things apart from self-reference and the wish to be admired. We have met with women, pronounced beautiful, who took a sort of ghastly and witchlike aspect in our eyes, as if they had been things walking the earth without a soul, or with some evil intention. The woman who supped with the goule in the 'Arabian Nights' must have been a beauty of this species*." The obvious conclusion from such observation of facts seems to be simply this, that even for a woman to please and to be womanly, for whatever sphere you may intend her, she should have graduated long in the Children's Bower. We may add, that if a family is to possess attractions for those who have the tastes of the virtuous and noble, such as have been known to induce, not alone parents, but even young men like the Duc de Saint-Simon, to desire to contract alliance with them by marriage—("for," as Saint-Beuve remarks, "it was with the family of the Duc and Duchesse de Beauvilliers that this young nobleman fell in love when he proposed for one of their daughters"),—it should favour and retain what may be called the genius of the bower. Even the court of Louis XIV. itself seems not to have been insensible to its charm; for on an occasion of choosing a lady of honour on the marriage of the Duc de Berri, the king had on his list one who is described as "a

* L. Hunt, Men, Women, and Books.

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person of great sweetness of disposition, of piety, of merit and virtue, and a certain grace of language remarkable in her family, but who in her life had never seen either the court or the world."

But to return. In Homer's time it was thought a sufficient reason to allege for offering any entertainment to a stranger, to say that the remembrance of it might please him when he sat at home with his wife and children:

——————— ὅτε κεν σοῖς ἐν μεγάροισι
Δαινύῃ παρὰ σῇ τ' ἀλόχῳ καὶ σοῖσι τέκεσσιν.

Perhaps in modern times such a motive would not be always deemed quite sufficient. The love of home is not so dominant; and, besides, when the views and manners of very unchildlike elders influence even those of the bower, as unhappily sometimes they will, there are other causes tending to break up homes. Speaking of their destruction by the manners and spirit of an evil culture entering them, the Père de Neuville used these solemn words: "The hand of God is not necessary to accomplish that; our own passions serve for the purpose,—'in solitudinem erit domus hæc.' The enchanting cup of luxury suffices. It soon puts an end to the days of children. Children die at the outset of their course. How many illustrious families, the most ancient, the most august, do we see decline! how many great names will soon live only in history!—'in solitudinem erit domus hæc.' Great men of the earth, rich men and powerful, frightened at the solitude around you in your palaces, in the midst of your treasures, you will see only a fearful void, room after room becoming vacant; you will see only heirs almost unknown to you, strangers arriving from afar to ask for your spoils,—'in solitudinem erit domus hæc.'"

Most men recur with fondness to the memory of home; but it is because they have once felt the charm of young thoughts in regard to it. Hence it is that—

"The hills are dearest which our childish feet
Have climbed the earliest; and the streams most sweet
Are ever those at which our young lips drank,
Stooped to their waters o'er the grassy bank *."

* Whittier.

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Hence it is that every heart responds to such lines as those of another poet, saying—

> "Home of our childhood! how affection clings
> And hovers round thee with her seraph wings!
> Dearer thy hills, though clad in autumn brown,
> Than fairest summits which the cedars crown!
> Sweeter the fragrance of thy summer breeze
> Than all Arabia breathes along the seas!
> The stranger's gale wafts home the exile's sigh,
> For the heart's temple is its own blue sky *."

But let us observe examples in the young of this love of home, from which all men might derive so useful a lesson.

Henry d'Osseville, in his tenth year, instead of sitting in the bower, is found among students in the college of St. Acheul. "He was of so amiable a disposition," says his biographer, "that every one loved him. A certain tenderness and delicacy marked all his words and actions, and he loved home," poor child! "so intensely, that he used to weep whenever he had to be absent from it." In general, children feel in this respect like a young person in one of our old plays, who says, "I am not weary of this living, for I take more content in my obedience here than all delights the time presents elsewhere." Who could express the intensity of this kind of love that was felt by our little John, who "had never winged from view of the nest, nor knew what airs from home?" He had no thought or wish beyond it. "A son nourished by his mother," says the Père Boutauld, "will be the joy of his house, and the happiness of the town he lives in." So it was literally with him. People loved the love of home in him. Strangers felt a tie binding him to them, and would smile to see him pass. Oh, when he died, what would have been the agony of thinking him sent to wander among the unnumbered millions of orbs which form the planetary system through infinite space between Jupiter and Saturn, the planets that shone so brilliantly at the time of his departure; sent to journey alone amidst the shining globes that are not even any longer recognized as fixed, but which are

* Holmes.

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known to revolve like the rest, subjected to a perennial fluctuation through the illimitable universe,—if faith had not been there to answer nay! but he dies to be with Him, benign Creator of the stars, who gave him a little quiet sheltered home on earth just such as he himself liked, who made what he loved above all things—his mother, and who has prepared another and a happier bower for him appropriate to his nature in Abraham's bosom.

Observe, again, his eldest brother. That love for England which so inspired him that I believe he would rather kiss an English pair of pattens than obtain the hand of a foreign princess,—that passion for the state of England, for its honour and its prosperity irrespective of all parties, as well as that kind of chivalrous loyalty which he cherished for the person of the queen,—all this was not without deriving some force from his fondness for home, and for its ancestral associations, which, working with his own loving nature, had generated a disgust for those religious and political exaggerations that are fed by mixing in the cabals and catching the language of the intriguing and self-interested world. True, with regard to private life, like most youths of his age and spirit, he was fond of observing what could be met elsewhere, while some days at home he might starve for a merry look. Seated with many a generous friend of his own making, he might have said, like Telemachus to his host, "Press me not to remain,"

> Καὶ γάρ κ' εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν ἐγὼ παρὰ σοί γ' ἀνεχοίμην
> Ἥμενος, οὐδέ κέ μ' οἶκου ἕλοι πόθος, οὐδὲ τοκήων.
> Αἰνῶς γὰρ μύθοισιν ἔπεσσί τε σοῖσιν ἀκούων
> Τέρπομαι.

But let his absence, in point of fact, be protracted for a little space, and all his thoughts are rooted in his home. In the diary that he kept when a boy he made no secret of this affection; for when writing on one occasion at a distance from it he said, "I would give my eyes to return home." Another significant entry, that recalls Pepys' saying "at home practising to sing, now my great trade," is to this effect, "Dining with such a person, I sung in the evening, and this was the first time that I ever sung out of our own home." He used to confess this

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"weakness" to strangers, and say, in the absence of his family, that for all his airs no one ever loved his home and those belonging to it more than he did. In the delirium of his last sickness he fancied himself with strangers, and kept saying, "I must go home, let me go home;" and on hearing, "but you are at home, sweet son," he recognized his mother, and became again quiet and contented.

The love of home, derived from witnessing the example of children, involves of course love for persons, and in this relation we must now consider it.

Grown-up brothers and sisters with sons and daughters might, perhaps, sometimes, however transcendentally moved, derive a very useful lesson from taking a glance backward at the thoughts and affections and the ways of poor innocent childhood left almost to itself. Little John one day was watching his brother, next in age to himself, leap across some hurdles. He made no remark at the time; but shortly after, when the grand games were over, very quietly he said to him in an under-tone of voice, "O K—! when you jumped over the rails, I felt quite proud to be your brother." In general one might have said of him and of the rest—

> "They have still slept together;
> Rose at an instant; learn'd, play'd, eat together,
> And wheresoe'er they went, like Juno's swans,
> Still they went coupled, and inseparable."

"Gustave de Villers," says his biographer, "was full of complaisance for a little brother of his own, and used to try to join in his infantine plays to amuse him, though it was often contrary to his own inclination at the time." It was a piteous sight, believe me, to see the poor hurdle-leaper walk about solitary, looking on the ground, with his hands in his pockets, for many a day after he had lost the companion whose head only came up to his waist. But no more of that. His eldest brother's pleasure sometimes at seeing his little sister's hair more smartly dressed than usual could not be expressed by words. He used to shout out with delight; and then with what eyes did the whole flock regard him! That was no wonder; for in truth well might a stranger exclaim like Nausicaa, when he passed,

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Τρισμάκαρες μὲν σοί γε πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ,
Τρισμάκαρες δὲ κασίγνητοι.

Again, from the manner in which such children and young people treat domestics, a most useful lesson might be derived for later life, when so many teach servants their duties with as much scorn and tyranny as some people teach their dogs to fetch. The Père Boutauld remarks, "How children love servants! they fulfil," he says, "the precept 'Si est tibi servus fidelis, sit tibi quasi anima tua; quasi fratrem sic eum tracta.'" John treated them as his brothers, sisters, and friends, loving to play with them, and to walk out with them on Sunday; and when he died, one of them refused for a long time to have a Sunday stroll, saying that she could not bear it without him. "Ferdinand Egret, when a little boy," says the author of Remembrances of St. Acheul, "used to treat the servants as his own equals. Never a commanding or impatient word fell from him." Our little John and his brother could never understand why servants should not always be their playmates. "You're a brick and a half!" used the eldest to say to one who attended on him. The consequence was, when both fled from here, there was not a dry eye in the house.

Now here, beyond all question, is a very useful lesson that can be best learned, as we have just witnessed, in the bower. Formerly children's manners, in regard to servants, extended to the hall. Even so late as in the wretched times of Charles II. in England, we find Pepys speaking of all his servants in a familiar way by name, when thanking God for the prosperous state of his affairs; and on another occasion, when speaking of his wife's intended trip to Calais, saying, "It makes good sporte that my maid Jane dares not go; and Besse is wild to go, and is mad for joy, but yet will be willing to stay if Jane hath a mind." Another time, before a day on the river, he says, "My people rise mighty betimes, and my boy, he could not sleep, but wakes about four o'clock, and in bed lay playing on his lute till daylight, and, it seems, did the like last night till twelve o'clock. He is a brave boy, sings finely, and is the most pleasant boy at present, while his ignorant boy's tricks last, that ever I saw." And again, "It being my Lord Mayor's show, my boy and

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the maids went out; but, it being a very foul, rainy day, I was sorry my wife let them go out." In fact, this was the old Christian way, which our bower antiquarians only try to retain, without any view to the archæological interest attached to it. Since the first ages of Christianity, to sweeten the toil of others by enfranchisement, consequently, when the need of such acts had ceased, to remove, as far as possible, all that might embitter the life of those who served others, had been deemed a work and a manner of life of such transcendent virtue, under the form of what is most common in human kindness, that it was thought powerful to move the will of heaven to have mercy on the living and on the dead, or, in the words of sacred Scripture, to facilitate forgiveness both "in this world, and" in "the world to come." Do you ask proof? Take one fact as representing a thousand others. Read the following charter:—"A certain knight and illustrious vassal, named Hamelin, was about deposing his sword and yielding to the necessities of age, when he was traitorously attacked and killed by his enemies. His wife Hildeburge, and their sons Hubert and Giraud, overwhelmed with grief, and uneasy respecting the fate of his soul, and anxious to obtain the remission of his sins, give freedom to one of his colliberts, called Gosselin, and declare him and all his posterity free. At their request, the monks of St. Aubin have drawn up the charter, to which divers persons attached their signature *." Such charters are no longer required; but one would like to see other proof that the Children's Bower has nothing to teach us on this head, besides what may be presented in true accounts of the general style of treating domestics at the present day.

There remains another lesson of affection to be learned in this leafy academy of young people. It is that of attachment to parents, and respect for them.

In the dispositions of the mind of children, there is as much evidence of the Divine contrivance as can be found in the material world, from observing which fact, philosophers arrive, by a less trite and explored path, at a conviction of the existence of an intelligent and personal Creator. The attachment of

* Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, tom. ii. 414.

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children to their parents, and the sort of instinctive respect which even the lightest youths entertain for them, may be cited as an instance. Gerson proposes the simplicity of their love in this respect, as an example to teach men how they should meet difficult questions respecting preferences, on occasions when it might be hard to give an answer without offending either truth or nature. "When they are asked," he says, "which they love best, father or mother? they give a right answer without any comparison, saying, I love my father and my mother. This is the sort of answer," he adds, "that we should make, when asked, Do you wish so or so? and contrary motives might exist to determine us. We might be tempted to say what is untrue, or what would be unnatural; and therefore the best and safest reply to such questions, is that which resembles the answer of the boys *." The bower preserves those ancient manners in this respect, of which, as an instance, may be cited the words of the Duc de Saint-Simon on one occasion, where he says, "My father had the goodness, for it would not become me to say the simplicity, to take charge of this commission †." But let us witness examples. How this little John was devoted to his parents, ever seeking to oblige and serve them! He had no deeper thought, or one to which he recurred oftener, than that of how he could make his mother happy when he grew up. Yes, he would live with her all his life; he would keep and drive a carriage for her; and if, after a few years spent in hunting, he became a priest, which he said he intended to do, oh! then he would hear her confession; at which thought he would have a hearty laugh. He used to regard the least vexation occurring to her as his greatest misfortune, and he thought no punishment so severe as to see her sad and silent.

> "So, for the mother's sake, the child was dear,
> And dearer was the mother for the child."

He would never hear her talk of her dying. He would then stop her mouth with both his hands. Eight years seemed to have sufficed to warn him of a day the future might have in store for him, when he would have to say,—

* Explicatio hujus Sententiæ, Fiat voluntas tua. † ii. 318.

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"Mother, dear mother! I've wander'd long
And must wander still in these lands of song.
I have found the world so unlike thee,
I have been so forced a rock to be,
It has froze my heart*."

God spared him that affliction. Yet, "O my God!" some one exclaimed, on witnessing the mode of his escape, "Thou didst promise length of days in the land to those children who honoured their parents." How is this? Why, simply, we are told, it is because we are not under the ancient law. That makes the difference. Then, in his father's absence, "Does pa say he is going to come home soon, Mary?" he used to say to his little sister. "Do read me his letter." His eldest brother, always making out people better than they were, used to say to his own friends, "Some one," naming one not to be named here, "is a brick;" and when dying, he was heard saying to himself, "Poor ——, how will he bear it!" "That boy will do well," said an old general officer, who had some talk with him at a distance from home; "I never met a youth before who seemed to have such a respect for his mother, and such a resolution to obey her." He had been charged by parental authority never to bet on any occasion, to the value even of a shilling. He loved the course, and the horses, and the gay, exciting scene of a great gathering of people; and he cared not a snap for his money; but he was never known, in a single instance, to have transgressed the command. Perhaps you will think this a small matter; but there was nothing really great for which he doubted his own capacity, that he would not have undertaken for his parents. He was put to the test on one occasion. He acted as being convinced that they knew what was better for him than he knew himself. He distrusted his own views, and without consulting those views, he respected and embraced theirs; he offered to fulfil them. What could he have done more? Oh, could he recall the days that are past, there is little doubt, from what one observed in him, which among them he would choose! It would not be, as Lamb might say, "those merrier days, nor the pleasant days of hope, nor those wanderings on horseback, nor

* Willis.

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those triumphs in the chace, but it would be the days of a mother's fondness for her boy *." Through a certain dread of the consequences of boasting, like that of the old Greeks, every allusion that could awaken a sense of family pride was carefully suppressed in Tom's presence; but to the mind of such sons, whatever you may do, every thing associated with the family is dear,—their armorial bearings, their ancestral curiosities, their name, their hereditary friends. Indeed, as we have already remarked, the sort of welcome they give a father's guests is truly Homeric. "What," they ask, "are you a paternal guest? Many other men too know our house." Tom, who thought indeed, I must repeat it, every one better than he really was, and it would have been a crime to undeceive him, seemed always ready to urge a kind of Homeric claim to favour on the ground of others' worth, saying,

πατρὸς δ' ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ἐγὼ γένος εὔχομαι εἶναι.

He loved some of the old French noblesse for always styling him "my cousin," and he used to express playful wonder at finding survive amongst the relatives of his mother that spirit of kinship which in our own country, if not wholly extinct, is at least very different from what it used to be. "I have always treated him as my own son," says the Duc de Saint-Simon. "We are of the same house, though of a branch separated for more than three hundred years. I have always loved my name, and sought to assist those who bear it †." To find such impressions in England now, even among a nominal nobility, I rather think one must not go far from the bower in any direction. But let us return to the children and their filial love.

Louis Beauvais, when very young, was once reprimanded by his mother. Some servants came to him and said that he had done nothing to incur such blame. "Don't speak so of mamma," he replied, "she did it for my good, and I deserved it ‡." "My sole regret at school," says Gabriel de Vaufleury, writing to his mother, "is, that I am not with you. I play and amuse myself perfectly. Since I am so happy then, pray, dear

* Letters of C. Lamb, 31. † T. xiii. p. 228.

‡ Souvenirs de St. Acheul.

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mamma, be gay, and let me not see in your letters the trace of that grief which pierces my heart." At the least sign from his parents, Ferdinand Egret used to quit whatever he was doing, and fly to execute what they hinted at; and his pleasure seemed greater, when by so doing he could save trouble to others. "This disposition alone," adds his biographer, "gained him all hearts." In his last sickness, great sufferings caused him to cry out, and being entreated to suppress these cries for his mother's sake, that hint was sufficient. He closed his eyes, as if to indicate that he would be obedient unto death. So it was with our little John. When dying, he endeavoured to suppress his moans, only he would draw into the bed with him his mother's hand. Leon de Lastours, in his tenth year, having to make his first communion on his death-bed, said, "How happy my mother will be to know that I have made it!" Henry d'Osseville, of the same age, was so attached to his mother, that the thought alone of his ever having to receive a letter at college to tell him that she was sick, sufficed to bring the tears into his eyes. Shortly before his last sickness, he said to one of his fellow-students, "I should like to die before mamma, for I know I should not be able to bear the news of her death*." Gabriel de Vaufleury used to say to his mother, "I hope that God will grant me the favour of dying before you." Our little John repeatedly said the same thing, adding, that he could not endure the thought of not dying before his mother. Full of this feeling, our English children sing in spring time,

"If you dare to bring in May,
I fear you'll have a parent away."

The last words of Charles de Pichard were, to take leave of his father. "Papa," said he, "kiss me; I'm not afraid to die." "When the parents of Jules Quinque were travelling to Paris, where their son had just died, they were in danger from the extreme darkness of the night; until a mysterious brightness, as if proceeding from the lamps of the carriage, which previously they had tried in vain to light, shone out before the horses, and never ceased till they entered Autun. The fact was undeniable,

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul.

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and those poor parents believed that it was caused by their son wishing to indicate to them by this light the happiness he was enjoying, and his love and solicitude for them *."

Children and young people, as the holy fathers remark, would not change their parents in deepest poverty for any others, in consideration of obtaining wealth or honour. So powerful is the secret tie of blood, that this is perhaps true, without exceptions. They accept those given them by nature with all their faults, miseries, and humiliations. They cling to them even before the holy altars, and, as Malotin says,—

> "Come, 'tis a golden precedent in a child
> To let strong nature have the better hand,
> In such a case, of all affected reason."

Sometimes, indeed, there have been attempts, when no occasion was presented, to supersede the spirit of the bower, and these fundamental principles, by other views and motives professing a higher object; and here, I hope, a kind of retained advocate for the bower may have permission, according to the fair play of the world, to argue its cause a moment in opposition to certain grave persons, who occasionally come forward to break up, without any sufficient reason, the circle of his little clients. Having besought a hearing, our pleader, I know, ought to measure and weigh well all his words; but, without giving any just cause of offence, methinks he may call attention to this fact, that from time to time there have been promoted and facilitated disruptions of this kind, without any necessity existing, when practically, in spite of formal, and, no doubt, of true professions, it seemed to amount to this—

> "——— out, affection!
> All bond and privilege of nature break!
> Let it be virtuous to be obstinate."

Then, he will continue, appeared to be suspected or disregarded all circumstances and relations, all indications of an ordinary providential order, all feelings of humanity, all considerations that did not centre in an exceptional state. But, he will affirm,

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul.

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such unnaturalness, called for by nothing visible and tangible, has seldom been practised with the approval of the wise, who like not this kind of dealing as such. St. Jerome speaks of a young person, who, through desire of perfection, wished to leave her mother. "My mother," she wrote to him, "is an obstacle to my good resolutions. She is opposed to the pious kind of life which we laid down together, as you know." But St. Jerome replied: "No matter; even if your mother be as you describe her, continue to live with her, for you will acquire thereby greater merit and a greater reward." St. Chrysostom took a similar view of his own duty when St. Basil tried to persuade him to leave his mother for the desert. But in modern times, he will observe, the force of these examples does not seem to be so much felt by some, who even appeal to judgment and liberty, without appearing to extend much favour to either; for of what avail could be invitations to consider, when, by the very necessity of their position, those who were to state the case could only present the advantages of one side of the question on which a decision was to be come to? Of course they succeeded; but in such a triumph there was little scope for judgment or for liberty; little chance given to the spirit of the bower. On such occasions, for any one else to have cited St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome would have been a mere waste of breath. Such citations would be only ascribed to the pedantry of book-worms, who "little know the Divine rule with respect to holiness and impiety," as Euthyphron said, when he explained why he prosecuted his own father. The bonds of nature, which are those of heaven, are then slipped, dissolved, and loosed; and with another knot, five-finger tied, the fragments, all transformed, are bound to an idea. In vain those from whom they turned used to cry, "We'll no more meet, no more see one another; but yet you are our flesh and blood:—O! be persuaded: do not count it holy to hurt by being just." Mournful silence used to be the answer, leaving to them to read it thus: "I have forgot my father and my mother, sisters, brothers,—all. I know no touch of consanguinity, no kin, no love, no blood, no soul so near me as my resolution." Brave and sublime constancy! I know, he will add, if needed,—but possibly in cases where it was not needed, and when only

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internal feelings and the merest coincidences were appealed to, example of somewhat an ambiguous character, admitting of being traced to the operation of that extravagance, to which the noblest as well as the weakest minds are liable, when, in the blaze of youth, oil and fire, too strong for reason's force, o'erbear it and burn on. Unquestionably no one has a right to close any door of happiness, and still less of sanctity, against the most dependent of his fellow-creatures. All should be free to enter whichever they may choose. True, he will concede, the whole of Christian history is here to proclaim that Divine love can accomplish all things; and the heart itself can teach the weakest of us that we owe the best of ours, which is always his own gift, to God. But for all that, allow him to remark, nature will say, and she has sometimes a right to be heard, that it is only fair to suggest on most occasions the need of caution, the wisdom of delay before kindling the pile; for first appearances are not always in favour of a move that involves an exceptional preference, when tenderness, the touch of blood, all the soul of woman, all the sweetness, are to be classed with something sinister, as opposed to a feeling of another kind, and placed, as others think wantonly, in the opposite scale with duty. So that, when the latter is thought to call, there will be no alternative for these innocents but to fly away from the bower, and from all its angel-faces, as from a pagan den and a nest of spiritual seducers,—vowing more than the perfection of ten, and discharging, as some, perhaps, may rashly and rudely add, "less than the tenth part of one;"—when all "sad farewells are to be fumbled up into a loose adieu, and oldest loves scanted with a single famished kiss, distasted with the salt of broken tears."

The convent is almost coeval with Christianity; but the bower, this advocate will remind you, is older; and that it was not intended to last along with it, as another holy and inviolable place, most men would admit with difficulty. In the presence of revealed truth, he will concede, there are always multitudes for whom the religious institution is prepared, as if expressly to verify the Apostle's words, that "his commandments are not grievous,"—multitudes for whom it is thrown open as a blessed asylum, unfolding a source of utility to the world, to the Church,

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and to themselves. To malign it, is simply the part, he will boldly say, of one impious, ignorant, or insane; to prevent a vocation, he will add, would be not only cruel, irreligious, and the part of a meddling, ill-natured person, but it would be contrary to all the traditions of Christian nobility; as when the Duc de Beauvilliers could only reply to Saint-Simon, who demanded his daughter, when wishing to become a nun, "Si c'est sa vocation, que voulez-vous que j'y fasse? Il faut suivre la volonté de Dieu, et il sera le protecteur de ma famille. Dieu aura la préférence, et l'auroit sur le dauphin même*." That there are sacrifices upon which Heaven itself throws incense, the bower's advocate will not be the person to deny; and he will observe, moreover, that there are noble souls, which even from an unnecessary step can reap later immense advantage; but he will conclude by saying, that to the best of common mortals' judgment, at least, it does not seem to follow, that it must always, in every case, heedless of ordinary providential signs, be the right thing to take that step, even though others should for a moment talk of their being cut to the brain by their so doing. However, as there is no proceeding in such cases by fine and recovery, he will finish, perhaps, invoking the influence of sportive humour while calling for a verdict in favour of the bower. He will say, that when it is a question of leaving it, be the destination proposed what it may, no one should be let out unless the reason be palpable, and the occasion fitting and imperative. The good man who is come to offer an escort should be warned, he will say, lest he take upon him at once the twofold and opposite offices of leading into grace and out of it. Come to transplant sweets, he may be civilly entreated to pass on to parterres where there is need of that operation. Here, perhaps, can be spared neither bud nor flower; and as for the sweet marjoram of the salad, or rather the herb of grace, let him go his ways, for no one here wants to fall out with him. Let his courtesies alone; they are scurvy ones. Let him depart, a stranger, no offender; and inform him so 'tis our will he should. Though you pinch me like a pasty, I can say no less or more.

* Mém. de Saint-Simon, i. 125.

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The love of parents for their children should hardly be noticed here, as constituting one of the lessons to be learnt from the bower, though we may take a rapid glance at it, as being capable of increase and development by the influence of what is there observed.

"Pulchra copula," says St. Ambrose, "seniorum et adolescentum. Alii testimonio, alii solatio sunt: alii magisterio, alii delectationi."

> "——— I have
> Held and sustain'd thee from thy tott'ring childhood:
> What holy bond is there of natural love,
> What human tie that does not knit thee to me?"

So speaks the parent, friend, and companion. In another drama a father is heard saying,

> "——— If at home, sir,
> He's all my exercise, my mirth, my matter;
> Now my sworn friend, and then mine enemy;
> My parasite, my soldier, statesman, all;
> He makes a July's day short as December;
> And with his varying childness cures in me
> Thoughts that should thick my blood."

It is the same where the bower, long unvisited, is only remembered by some one that might most need its lessons:

> "A lone, stern man. Yet as sometimes
> The tempest-smitten tree receives
> From one small root the sap which climbs
> Its topmost spray and crowning leaves,
> So from his child this father drew
> A life of love and hope, and felt
> His cold and rugged nature, through
> The softness and the warmth of her young being, melt *."

I think one might trace to the same recollections that affecting trait of Lepida, the mother of Messalina, "quæ florenti filiæ haud concors, supremis necessitatibus ad miserationem evicta erat †." But we must return to the general instructions which

* Whittier. † Tacitus, Ann. xi.

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children will often expressly supply, and continue to observe them in relation to the spirit of love with which they are so richly endowed, that their presence alone constitutes a benediction. You will still, reader, have to bear with one who has memory each moment to invoke. 'Tis now the winter of his life:

"The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.
Yet not unmeet it was that two, like those young friends of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should vanish with the flowers *."

Addressing, then, alternately those who have departed only to flourish in a happier clime, he will say to each,

"In meadows fanned by heaven's life-breathing wind,
In the resplendence of that glorious sphere,
And larger movements of the unfettered mind,
Wilt thou forget the love that joined us here?
The love that lived through all the stormy past,
And meekly with my harsher nature bore,
And deeper grew, and tenderer to the last,
Shall it expire with life, and be no more?
A happier lot than mine, and larger light,
Await thee there; for thou hast bowed thy will
In cheerful homage to the rule of right,
And lovest all, and renderest good for ill.
Yet though thou wear'st the glory of the sky,
Wilt thou not keep the same beloved name,
The same fair, thoughtful brow, and gentle eye,
Lovelier in heaven's sweet climate, yet the same?
Shalt thou not teach me, in that calmer home,
The wisdom that I learned so ill in this,—
The wisdom which is love,—till I become
Thy fit companion in that land of bliss?"

* Bryant.

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CHAPTER VII.

OWER, forsooth! What means this rocking? The idea of placing it in a boat, and in the Alarm, too! I wonder where you'll have it next. However, I own it is pleasant here. You know my old loves! Come, Jack, don't lean over so far. You'll have to be drying your hair like Dash if you do; and you see how he is shaking and trembling there in the bow, as if he had caught the ague. Shall we give Gyp a swim? Well, as you please; but do lie down on your back like me. How deliciously the sun shines on us, with this breeze to moderate the heat! and then, do you hear the ripple of the waves against the side? But how shall we ever pull all the way back against this tide? Ah, dear Jack, dear Tom! there are waters any of us may have soon to navigate, that there is no rowing back against. But come, I should like to hear you know who playing on his cornet. Let it be your other brother's favourite air, the only song we can ever get from him,—

"A life on the ocean wave!"

Oh, Jack! you did right to bring us here. I really can now fancy a bower under this blue water, where I spy tangled tufts, feathery stems, beautifully veined leaves, waving to and fro in the little caverns among the rocks, with mosses too, and coloured leaves of every tint, and things here and there like seats and bushes. With head downwards, I am wandering through the groves and meadows of the submarine world, while I feel the sun as warm as ever as our boat glides over them. 'Tis well with us here! even though we are not on the Thames,

"Deus nobis hæc otia fecit."

But let us begin what we have got to say to furnish out this next chapter.

It would be difficult to estimate the value of those instructions to persons of mature life, though so seldom supplied to them,

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which have for their object the formation of manners that conciliate the affection of others. "He will teach his way," it is said in the Psalms, "to those who are gentle and humble *." Amiable manners, by these words, seem, therefore, to be almost elevated to the rank of what is called, in scholastic language, theological virtue; which will not surprise those who remember the remark of Homer, which Socrates cites with such applause, that "the just are gentle."

But besides this lofty consideration, which is more immediately for others, there are not wanting motives that should induce every common mortal to study the art of pleasing manners, which often consists, indeed, in getting rid of art; for it is more artificial to be peevish, sullen, froward, proud, stubborn, stately, imperious, scornful, and commanding, than to be the opposite of all this; and therefore poor Juliet might well say, excusing her quick fondness, and what, she confesses, her lover might mistake for light behaviour,

> "But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
> Than those that have more cunning to be strange."

Sweet engaging ways are the simplest, the most natural, the easiest to practise; and without them what is even woman, however virtuous, while, like Goneril, she is "too much i' the frown?"

> "A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,
> Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty;
> And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty
> Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it."

"We are born," says the Père Lebrun, "for the society and community of the human race, and therefore we should study that discipline in which all society and community of life must be contained †." He then points out the importance of civility, observing that urbanity and Christian piety cannot be separated from each other. He enters into details, prescribing how and when to uncover, to rise up, to reply, to form the countenance to sweetness, and practise all those attentions which are opposed to sullen or rustic barbarism. He teaches the importance of

* xxiv. † Lebrun, Institutio Juventutis Christianæ.

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having that instinct of order and decorum in deeds and words which is peculiar to man, and of contracting no habits abhorrent from the custom of gracious and polite children; for as beauty of body, he says, "consisting in an apt composition of members, delights the eye, so the grace and decorum of manners please the mind; and to these nothing is so much opposed as pride; for pride renders disagreeable both the countenance, the manner, the gait, and the deportment*." Father Roberti wrote a treatise even for persons of monastic life, which all turned upon the importance of those little virtues which constitute what we may call endearing manners. "No minds are more hostile to human society," says St. Francis de Sales, who also attached great importance to such manners, "than those that are obstinate and apt to contradict others. They are the pests of conversation, the scourge of a company. Gentle minds, on the contrary, condescending, flexible, pliable, tractable, and easily yielding, are the living charms which draw and gain all the world." Father Bonifacius treats at great length on the advantages of cultivating politeness, urbanity, and those manners which, along with religion, can render persons pleasing, not only to God, but also to men. He remarks that Cicero, when describing proper attention to good manners, says, "We follow nature, and fly from all that is abhorrent from the approbation of the eyes and ears,—the posture, the gait, the countenance, the eyes, the motions of the arms, should all observe that decorum which is alike distant from effeminacy and rusticity, or an inhuman negligence." Then, to show the efficacy of religious instructions on this head, after describing the meeting of St. Paul and St. Anthony, he says, "What court ever shows men so officious and polite? Believe me, the desert surpassed the royal chambers in this humane art of showing respect and honour†." St. Ambrose lays great stress on gentleness and modesty of manners, requiring it in all actions and words, in the tone of voice, and even in the gait. He speaks of having had a bad opinion of a certain person merely from his walk, and he says

* Lebrun, Institutio Juventutis Christianæ.

† Institutio Christiani Pueri.

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that this very person afterwards apostatized. What struck him, he says, was a certain insolent air; and the event verified his opinion. He requires the total absence of affectation, and says that we should have a manner "perfectly natural." St. Gregory Nazianzen saw Julian when a youth at Athens, and he predicted the end he would come to from observing his insolent air and behaviour,—he had a ferocious scowl, a wandering of the eyes, contemptuous nostrils, petulant laughter, hasty questions, and answers no better; and he remarked all this to his friends at the time, saying of him, "Quale malum Romanorum terra nutrit!"

But it seems needless to multiply testimonies to the importance of possessing the endearing manners that bespeak the influence of the loving spirit, though there are grave ones amongst us who seem to have a lurking suspicion that there is evil even in that very spirit. What we have now to do is to call attention to the fact that no where can such manners be so well learned as in the Children's Bower.

Instead of attempting a rhetorical description of what any one can observe with his own eyes, let us take a few childish examples which may answer the same purpose as if we actually were in the presence of these young people, observing them conversing together in their bower; for these instances will be simply though accurately given, so as to convey, perhaps, the same impression that the facts themselves would produce. The youngest will be the best to produce; for this blossom of the human character is seen best in them; just as the spring, with its lightsome spiral forms, its spotty variegated foliage, its sunshine and its freshness, exceeds in beauty all that summer, with its fuller development, can yield.

Henry d'Osseville, in his tenth year, who was of such candour that no one could ever induce him to disguise or suppress any thing, "used," says his biographer, "to be a little wild and inattentive at his studies, but he had such winning ways of appeasing his teachers, that they always found it impossible to be angry with him*." Juveniles, of course, in general will have their sallies at times, but they are never wounding; so innocent,

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul.

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so childlike, so far from malice are they. If angered in pretence, each, like him that had to play the lion before ladies, will "aggravate his voice so, that he will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; he will roar you an 'twere any nightingale." Some of their elders seem composed like the bottom of the Thames, which feels to your feet like butter and broken glass. Young people have no tones of voice ludicrously affecting sweetness, tenderness, and gentleness, which ill disguise rancour and displeasure, ever ready to cut you to the bone. "'A furious woman affecting sweet utterance!' exclaims an observer. 'Let us take any men's horses,' as Falstaff says*." But they have tones that are put on rather to bespeak roughness and sauciness, while they cannot hide the sweetness, tenderness, and gentleness that lie at the bottom, as in a fountain, inexhaustible. Leaving, however, all general remarks, here is a boy of eight years, and by this time I think that you must know his name, who shall play from this point all the parts required by the little drama of the present chapter; and I predict that we shall be all equally satisfied with him,—

> "So gentle, yet so brisk, so wondrous sweet,
> So fit to prattle at a lady's feet†."

Beginning with what is negative merit, we may observe that never did he make some little stop in his career of kindness; no one ever saw young John angry. Tall youths would pull him about, and sometimes go against his wishes in every way, but he was always the same; he kept the same little half innocent, half pert, and wholly joyous countenance, no matter what they did to him. One boy, not very much above him in age, used for sport, and perhaps through a little pride at his own business-like talents, to make him buy for sixpence what was only worth a penny, and then tell him how he had tricked him; but the victim only laughed as heartily as the other. He never minded being cheated in this way; on the contrary, he seemed to share in the sport, and think it capital fun. When he wanted any thing from his grandmother he used to stop outside her door, and sing some little song that he knew she liked to hear; then,

* L. Hunt, Men and Books. † Churchill.

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on getting what he wanted, his answer would in part be literally that of his namesake Don John, "I thank you; I am not of many words, but I thank you." He used not, of course, expressly to qualify himself as being of few words, but on these occasions he was the thing itself, saying only, "I thank you very much." There was one who used, when taking a walk with him through solitary places, to wish sometimes to stop and read to himself; the more fool he now thinks himself for his pains, having then such a living book before him. Then, it was curious to see with what sweet patience this little lively boy would wait for him, accommodating himself to all humours; or if told to play, how he would be off "to fetch some trifles, and return again as from a voyage rich with merchandise." It would be a flower or a round pebble, or some sand in his handkerchief for his little sister's bird. "Well, Jack, do you think you can amuse yourself a little while longer till I finish these few pages?" "All right; that I can," he would reply. Then away he goes in a different direction on another voyage of discovery. Every where, in general, his disposition so wins on all appointed to attend him, that they are rivals who shall get precedence to do him service, which they seem to think a greater pleasure than if they had been fashioned to hold command over others. But let us hear him described by the mistress of his studies, and I shall leave the passage as it was written in French. And be not angry with us now, beloved one, if we recount thy virtues, which, while on earth, thou didst not love to hear even hinted at; for they can teach others to rise after thee to thy present joy; and how can we be silent?

> "Vitis ut arboribus decori est, ut vitibus uvæ,
> Ut gregibus tauri, segetes ut pinguibus arvis,
> Tu decus omne tuis."

"Monsieur," writes this lady, "vous m'avez demandé quelques pensées, quelques mots de ce petit Jean que nous pleurons. En rappelant mes souvenirs il me semble que toute sa trop courte vie serait à citer, car il avait continuellement sur les lèvres quelques paroles gracieuses et si pénétrantes que redites par moi elles perdront beaucoup, parceque tout le charme était dans sa si douce expression, dans sa pose si noble et si gracieuse, dans

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ses yeux si bons, dans son sourire si fin et si caressant; cependant je vais me faire un bien doux devoir de vous redire ce qui a fait sur moi une impression telle qu'elle ne s'effaçera jamais de mon cœur.

"Pour la moindre bagatelle ce cher enfant avait une reconnaissance au delà de toute imagination; il me semble encore lui entendre me dire avec cet accent de franchise partant de son si bon petit cœur, 'Oh! c'est trop fort . . . C'est trop fort, ma bonne mamouselle: merci, merci beaucoup, beaucoup,' et alors ses jolis yeux en disaient autant que son cœur. Pour moi je n'étais jamais si heureuse que quand je pouvait lui faire accepter quelque chose. De même qu'en cœur généreux il s'extasiait sur le peu qu'il recevait, lorsqu'il faisait un cadeau il le dépreciait toujours en disant gracieusement, 'Oh, ce n'est point assez beau pour vous,—c'est très vilain, j'aimerais de vous donner un plus joli présent,' et ainsi mille mots plus aimables les uns que les autres. Souvent causant ensemble dans le jardin ce charmant enfant s'arretait tout court, puis en m'entourant de ces petits bras il me disait, 'Vous, petite mamouselle, moi et notre ami Rose, oh, comme nous sommes inséparables! Nous ne craignons ni le vent, ni la pluie, ni la neige; rien, rien, pourvu que nous soyons ensemble.' Ce cher petit ami ayant remarqué que j'aimais souvent à dire la locution, n'importe quoi, trouvait toujours moyen de la placer dans ses phrases, et ne manquait jamais de s'arrêter avec une intention marquée sur chaque syllabe, et lorsqu'à ses leçons il se trouvait embarrassé et qu'il croyait que j'allais me fâcher, il commençait son délicieux rire; puis approchant sa petite tête de la mienne il me disait, 'Et . . . puis . . et puis . . n'em . . por . . te . . quoi.' Alors je n'avais plus le courage de le gronder; il venait de me rendre trop heureuse. Il aimait beaucoup, ce cher enfant, à m'entendre rire; aussi quand il était un peu triste, il venait me trouver et en me caressant il me disait, 'Oh! mamouselle, riez, riez, je vous en supplie, promesse vous que je serai sage, sage; mais vous savez de votre rire que j'aime tant, tant; et quand pour lui faire plaisir je riais en prononçant quelques mots Anglais, alors il me remerciait du fond du cœur en m'assurant que je lui avait fait du bien. Un jour en grondant ce cher ange il m'arriva de lui dire, 'John, vous verrez qu'un beau jour je le dirai à votre

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maman,' je le vis faire encore son ravissant sourire en disant, 'Oh, bien, c'est bien;' comme il pleut à verse! 'Ce ne sera pas pour aujourd'hui. Allons, je puis rire.' Le lendemain comme le soleil brillait je le vis venir se poser bien raisonnablement en s'écriant, 'Oh! comme il faut que je fasse attention aujourd'hui, petite mamouselle, car c'est un beau jour!' Pendant ses leçons tout en faisant beaucoup de progrès je l'ai toujours vu gai et riant, mais il était si bon, il s'arrangeait si bien qu'il m'était impossible de le gronder sérieusement. D'ailleurs quand j'avais l'air de me fâcher il me regardait avec sa charmante petite mine gracieuse et me disait, 'Oh! oui, bonne mamouselle, vous voulez faire la méchante, mais je sens que votre cœur n'est pas fâché; comme j'en suis content!' Pendant sa leçon de géographie il lui arriva souvent, quand il en était à me citer les principaux détroits, au lieu de me nommer le petit Belt, d'aller chercher sa ceinture, et de la poser juste à la place du détroit sur l'atlas; ou bien au lieu de me donner la description d'un cap, d'aller me chercher son petit chapeau, et de rire aux éclats en me disant, 'Petite mamouselle, voilà, voilà un gentil petit cap.' Toutes ces choses si simples en apparence, dites par lui avaient pour moi un charme infini. Il était heureux de se dire plus fort que moi. Aussi cherchait-il à le prouver à chaque instant du jour; je lui laissais bien volontiers cette satisfaction, car il m'etait impossible de lui résister. Un je ne sais quoi me faisait un doux plaisir de n'opposer à ce cher ange aucune résistance. Un matin nous étions au thé, il vint tout en me caressant me prendre par le bras, puis me poussant en riant jusqu'à la porte, et voulant prouver qu'il avait le pouvoir de me faire sortir, il me fit passer devant lui, et après m'avoir souhaité bonne promenade il rentra avec ses sœurs: il se croyait heureux et fier d'avoir été le plus fort, mais quand il vit que je ne revenais plus, et que ses sœurs lui dirent que j'étais bien fâchée, son bon petit cœur commença à s'attrister, et il vint de suite me trouver dans ma chambre. Je voulus d'abord faire la méchante, mais devant son ravissant petit visage je me sentais toujours devenir meilleure. Mon petit ami me connaissait bien; aussi malgré son trouble, au lieu de venir en suppliant, il prit son petit air gracieux, et en me prenant bien gentilment, il me dit, 'Commencez, commencez, petite mamouselle, à passer devant moi et à descendre beaucoup plus

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vîte que vous n'êtes monté, car sans cela c'est votre petit Jean qui se fâchera;' et il accompagnait ses paroles de si gracieux petits gestes qu'il m'en fallait pas tant de sa part pour me remettre la gaieté dans l'âme et même me rendre heureuse. Si à ces leçons pour le faire tenir je me plaignais d'un petit mal de tête, ou d'une fatigue, comme il voyait que ce n'était pas bien sérieux, il faisait d'abord semblant de me plaindre, mais ensuite fermant un peu les yeux et prenant un sérieux comique il me disait tout en hochant gracieusement sa petite tête, 'Voyons ce pouls. Ah! bonne mamouselle, ah! vous n'en mourrez pas encore cette fois . . . Allons, allons, nous pourrons encore rire.' Ayant apris que j'allais aller prendre mes vacances à Paris, ce cher enfant me dit un matin, 'Comment, voyons, arranger cela —j'ai bien, bien, oui bien de la peine que vous, vous en alliez pour un mois, mais cependant j'en suis content d'abord, parceque vous verrez votre bonne mère, et puis . . . (et il ajoutait cela avec un délicieux accent) et puis Vacance, vacance—Pas de leçons, merci, merci!' et en me caressant il me disait encore, '. . . vous ne savez pas, petite mamouselle, vous m'écrirez souvent, très souvent, sur du beau papier de couleur, mais vous aurez le soin de laisser une page vide, afin que moi aussi j'aie le plaisir de vous répondre avec la même couleur.' Un jour que ce cher enfant cherchait les contrées sur l'atlas, arrivé à la capitale de la Hollande, il s'arreta et se refusa la nommer, et quand je lui en demandai la raison, il fut étonné, et pinçant un peu ses lèvres il me dit en joignant les mains, 'Ma petite mamouselle, c'est si affreusement affreux pour l'Angleterre de dire ce mot Dam que je n'ose dire qu'Amster.' Quelquefois en levant les beaux yeux vers le ciel ce bon petit ange me disait, 'Oh! je ris tant au souvenir de tous nos jeux, ma mamouselle—et puis encore de toutes nos belles chasses que même là j'y penserai. Oh! quelle fête pour moi quand je vous verrai arriver . . . Comme nous aurons du plaisir à nous rappeler nos fameuses courses de la terre; oui, comme nous rirons en pensant à toutes les petites taquenneries que j'aimais tant à vous faire—bonne mamouselle. Oh! comme je serai content; n'est ce pas le Bon Dieu ne nous empêchera pas de rire—quel bonheur de rire même au ciel, petite mamouselle.' "

But we must hasten on. Such was the endearing manner of

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little John, of whom some one might well say, "odor filii mei sicut odor agri pleni." Yes, sweet and beautiful as a fruitful field; for why speak only of promises and hopes, when so much had been already realized? 'Twas a good boy, 'twas a good boy; we may pick a thousand salads ere we light on such another herb. As Wordsworth might say—

"He lived unknown, and few could know
When Johnny ceased to be,
But he is in the grave, and oh,
The difference to me!"

And the bower! and the garden! Ay, the difference to them too! For him now the laurels, for him the myrtles weep,—

"Illum etiam lauri, illum etiam flevere myricæ."

But why hold I discourse on this sad subject, since the memory of it is a burthen we are marked to bear, and not to be shook off but with our human frailty? He for his part did all he could in leaving us, as it were, in his little testament, the beautiful picture of his own life,—the best of treasures. We might add, that corresponding attractions belonged to his eldest brother. It is not alone that he was polished, modest, and respectful,—that he had that air of liberty which belongs to one who would neither constrain himself nor constrain others,—that ease, that freedom of manner which never lost sight of modesty,—there was something winning in his looks, and in every thing he did and said, which made him of all sorts enchantingly beloved.

——— πᾶσιν γὰρ ἐπίστατο μείλιχος εἶναι,
ζωὸς ἐών· νῦν αὖ θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κιχάνει.

As was written of another of his race, like him cut off in youth, we might truly say—

"Of softest manners, unaffected mind,
Lover of peace, and friend of human kind *."

Such is the spirit that breathes in the Children's Bower, as beautiful in form as it is, for all its apparent naturalness, mysterious and divine in its source; and this last remark will prepare us for the subject of the next chapter.

* Pope, Epitaph in Sherborne Church.

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CHAPTER VIII.

ELL, here is a place for a bower! I have heard of stylites who had their dwelling on top of a pillar; but to think of these children resolving to perch up there, not on natural rocks, but on huge stones artificially placed, as if the Druids had arranged them, though they are only vestiges of an architectural plan unfinished, and waiting there to be hewn and used for construction, if they should be able to complete the cloisters of the church adjacent! However, though void of all archæological or ethnological interest, these great stones have an attraction irresistible for juveniles, as you may see yourself; for no boy ever passes without climbing upon them, and many a little girl too, let me tell you, will be resolved to follow him in his aerial leaps from one summit to another. However, at present, our two have the place all to themselves; so having begged the others to draw near, and sit upon the rails, we may hold our academy near them, and even, if they will have it so, on the very tops where they sit at present.

So far we seem to have invited to take a lesson in the Children's Bower only persons who may be very ordinary mortals like ourselves; but here all of a sudden we are confronted with facts of such a nature as to make it difficult to escape from a conviction that our betters—yes, even the holiest of men and women—should come to this poor little unpretending circle of young people, provided, of course, the children would only choose some place more accessible to gravity, and that these wise persons should condescend to take from them examples and maxims of that spiritual perfection, and of that fulfilment of the beatitudes, on which the most serious authors treat, and which we all know to be the tests and ornaments of the best and highest life attainable by man. Perhaps it would not be over bold to affirm that without the influence of such examples and ways of thinking, furnished by childhood and youth, there may be danger in the very attempt to arrive at such perfection;

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for there are other places where youth is little known, and less thought of,—where all things "change from their ordinance, their natures, and pre-formed faculties to monstrous quality;" where there will be faith and no natural affection, religion and no humanity; where, as the Père de Neuville says, "what is of perfection will be practised rather than what is of command; where there will be much praying and little charity, much zeal and little kindness; where persons who scarce confess that their blood flows, or that their appetite is more to bread than stone, will do more than God requires, and will not do what He desires; where men will give Him what He counsels, and refuse Him what He commands." The treatise "on the little virtues," by the Père Roberti, was drawn up for the use of a nun, and the French translation of the work is approved of by Afre, the Archbishop of Paris, as being especially destined for religious persons; yet, when you come to read about these virtues, you find that these are actually the virtues of children and juveniles, and that each of these qualities is considered as having been brought to the highest perfection when it is exercised spontaneously without art, which is, in fact, precisely the characteristic of all such virtues when performed by the young.

> "The primal duties shine aloft like stars.
> The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
> Are scattered at the feet of men like flowers."

But if the latter are gathered by no hands more plentifully than by those of our little stragglers, it is no less true that they have the secret of drawing down from their orbs the former, and causing them to shine in their own hearts, and to enlighten others, reflected from what they think, and utter, and perform. In the world, moreover, you may be assured that

> "Extraordinary virtues, when they soar
> Too high a pitch for common sights to judge of,
> Losing their proper splendour, are condemn'd
> For most remarkable vices."

In the bower they will be not alone spontaneously practised, but they will pass, when seen in others, for what they are; they will be understood, appreciated, and adored.

Later we shall be able to observe in detail how divinely many

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of the highest virtues of the Christian life are practised by the artless young. In the present chapter I shall only venture to suggest, in a general way, that even persons of mature age who aspire to spiritual perfection might, perhaps, derive some little advantage by paying attention to what passes in the children's unpretending and too often slighted bower.

Childhood and youth, in the first place, might be termed emphatically the age of faith, hope, and charity; each of them constant, ever living, and active, not spasmodic, and kept up only by an effort. We shall see this proved later by abundant facts. At present we need only ask an assent, which few will be inclined to withhold, to the proposition that these great lessons can be read here. To glance but at the last of them. How many elder people, advanced in the knowledge and practice of religion, seem to come, on slightest occasions, "provided for storms and tempests, and the foulest season that ever rage let forth or blew in wildness from the incensed prison of man's blood!" 'Tis otherwise with the young like Jack and Thomas; they "come with mildness, peace, constant amity, and calm forgiveness, the weather of a Christian and a friend."

Again, might not some little matter be learned from the graceful obedience of children and youth? and also from their unaffected humility, so free from all grimace? in relation to which qualities, separately, we shall observe them later. Our little John, and his eldest brother too for that matter, had, at all events, what Rodriguez calls "the first degree of humility, which is, to have an humble opinion of one's self." Again, the young in general, without thinking of it, are apt to do to others all things whatsoever they would that men should do to them. It would be a curious study to observe how writers who treat on spiritual perfection lay greatest stress on the very virtues which, apparently unknown to them, can, in great measure at least, be learned from the young. Thus childhood and youth practise, without any murmuring, self-denial every day; they fly vainglory in their religious actions without knowing any thing of its malignity; they love union and fraternal love without seeming to be aware of their importance in a religious sense; they conform themselves to the will of God with simplicity, unconscious of the merit of their resignation; and they say and practise all

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things without pretension and without guile, truthfulness being their whole character; they are familiarized, as every one knows, with prayer; and as for meditation on grave subjects, only let them alone; we shall see later on this head, in another place, how they acquit themselves. The modest endurance of a froward countenance, indifference to humiliations and one's own abjection,—suffering without murmurs little injustices,—a love of doing mean servile offices beneath our condition, answering pleasantly to every one who reproves us, the being content after a refusal, and very grateful for a benefit, treating servants with goodness, being affable to inferiors—"all these," says Father Roberti, "seem little to those who have the heart high; but these are great things;" and they can be learnt, perhaps, in no way so effiaciously as by simply observing childhood and youth.

Again, young people never affect singularity, which is another trait of ascetic perfection that may be acquired in the bower. In the way of duties they do nothing after a fancy of their own; they adopt no symbolism to express their sense of it, and in consequence they are never laughed at. Then, too, their spirit of forgiveness is heroical. Edmond de Laage in his fourteenth year received a blow between the eye and the nose from one of his companions in play, which proved, after some time, mortal. Edmond went to him, and seeing him sad and uneasy, tried to console him, and did all he could to turn off his mind from thinking of it. All the while he had a presentiment of his own approaching death. When the result was about to realize his prediction, he was asked if he forgave the person who had wounded him. "Yes, with all my heart," he replied, "and besides, he did not mean to do it*." Another youth, perhaps you will guess his name, returning home late in a rough night on horseback, after long shouting for the gate-keeper, was roughly answered, his horse's head and bridle being violently seized by the man for wanting to pass the gate, though he declared he only thought he was helping the keeper to open it. Indignant at such violence, with boyish spirit, and perhaps, too, a little elate at the idea of his wearing a coat just lent to him which had been in the trenches at Sebastopol, he struck the assailant

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul.

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with his whip to make him let go, and dashed through. Cited afterwards to answer for an assault by the official whose servant had so treated him, he would not hear of any one blaming that officer for undue severity; on the contrary, though the man, whose rudeness was well known, had been the first to use violence with him, he maintained that it was right to take notice of the affair, as it was wrong in him to have done what he did; and he might be seen chatting and laughing familiarly with the superintendent, who was in the act of prosecuting him. Strangers used to feel annoyed sometimes at hearing the sarcasms occasionally darted at him on the score of his neglecting study for out-of-door exercises and the love of frolic; but he never seemed hurt by them himself. Perfectly aware of all that was pungent in the well-meant expressions, he only treated them as nettles, grappled with them and smiled. Never in the absence of those who used them did he utter a word that savoured of resentment; and when they were present he always addressed them with frank cordiality and graceful respect. In spite of all our ascetic books, the world does not seem so richly provided with dispositions of this kind that a visit from it for instruction to the Children's Bower would be at all times unnecessary.

In general, young people forget wholly whatever offence is committed against themselves; they never think of it a minute after. Is not this trait very noticeable? "There are persons," says St. Francis de Sales, "who pretend to forgive, and to wish every happiness to the person who has offended them, saying all the while, 'But I can't bring myself to see him, or talk with him, for his presence would rekindle my resentment.'" Such persons, you observe, have much to learn here. Children bear with people full of faults, and love them; and St. Francis de Sales says that this is the touchstone of true charity. Every day the young accomplish what Seigneri recommends, saying, "Try to do every thing in a spirit of joy and generosity." It is a perfect joy to them also to practise another lesson which he insists upon; for of their own accord they are sure, from time to time, to take to helping others, and discharging some humble and even menial office. "This practice," says Seigneri, "serves wonderfully to the acquirement of a command over one's self

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and one's actions, and of a power to laugh interiorly at the world." Moreover, the young act towards God as, Seigneri says, the perfect should do, like a child towards his father, and, he adds, that all who do so may be sure of being forgiven.

Children, again, and youth enjoy interior peace, of which the excellence, as well as the mode of attainment, may be learned from observing them. The knowledge of their own faults does not trouble them overmuch; they try to mend; but they do not despond like those whose self-pity and reproaches proceed from pride, as all ascetic writers show. In fine, we may learn from the bower the folly and malignity of that discord, of which the poet says,

> "So much her malice did her might surpass,
> That even th' Almighty self she did maligne,
> Because to man so merciful He was,
> And unto all his creatures so benigne."

In a word, the high principles of purest and loftiest Christian virtue can be found not alone slightly and correctly sketched, but often most fully and efficiently worked out and finished in the minds and manners of the young.

But perhaps, in concluding this chapter, we shall hear from some persons, philosophically-minded in the way of the world, that even granting the fact of ascetic lessons being given to those who observe what passes in the Children's Bower, they do not, for their part, think much of them, or estimate more highly the little people for imparting them either by example or word of mouth. In our times, this answer to all that we have just heard is to be expected; for supernatural graces, in the judgment of many who are ignorant what they mean, seem very questionable acquirements; if they are not even set down for so much obsolete folly, and for something perhaps worse than a mistake, as being not only useless, but noxious; while the virtues of these objectors, though admired by all parties, are weakly founded upon such principles, "that the very foundation helps to undermine the structure." I wonder what such persons would reply, if their attention were called to the fact that they themselves practise a certain kind of asceticism every day. Obedience is all monastic error, they opine,—

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"Yet, O thinge, sires, saufly dar I seie,
That frendes everyche other motte obeie
If thei wil longe holde compaigné."

They even renounce themselves with great self-denial; only they seem to many as if they did so for the world, which is a horrible kind of god; and then, as the Père de Neuville adds, "this self-sacrifice of theirs is a great folly, since the world is only a gross impostor, having nothing to give in return, proportionate to such a service;" whereas, if they had renounced their own wills for God, with simplicity, like children, which is a very different thing, they would, by so doing, have found themselves, and even every thing that they love, in Him; for "qui perdiderit animam suam propter me inveniet eam."

Their virtues then would indicate "the most childlike spirit retained in maturest brains and manliest hearts;" and who will not admire that result, call it by what name you will? The fact is, that the world itself, in the long run, is willing to supply its testimony to the importance of the lessons in regard to such perfection that can be obtained in the Children's Bower. "What virtues does God condemn in the world," asks the Père de Neuville, "which the world itself does not condemn? I call," he adds, "virtues condemned by the world, the virtues which the world does not dare to place in the number of virtues which it honours." Only give a different name to the ascetic acts practised by the young, and you will see how every one feels constrained to admire them. Philip II., having spent much of the night in writing, coming to the end of one sheet, called to his chamberlain for the sand, and he, giving him an inkstand instead, the king, with eyes intent upon another paper, poured its contents over what he had written. Every one admires his showing no anger on that occasion, but archly observing, "I am not so poor that I cannot have another sheet," and then proceeding to write it all out again without a murmur; which certainly was more noble than if, like Pepys, when the boy Eliezer flung down a can of beer upon his papers, he had given the offender a box of the ear, as the English secretary relates of himself; for however good-humouredly it might have been remembered, still it was a box on the ear by a passionate master's hand. Youth will generally try to turn all mischances

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to a jest, seeing ever a playful and humorous side, where age and sullens can only see perverseness, if not malignity; and if Philip had only practised other lessons of a similar kind, that might have been had in such a bower as this, the estimate now formed of his character by the generous part of mankind, would not be, as we before remarked, exactly what it is at present.

In general, I think that these suggestions will not be set down as wholly unfounded. Let men become like children; let them form themselves in this school by the manners and thoughts of juveniles, and they will certainly have many qualities in common with those who aim at the highest perfection; they will have neither presumption nor indocility; their genius will lose nothing in regard to grace and joyousness, but it will have no false-edged criticism or secret malignity; there will be no imposture and duplicity in their wisdom; their friendship will have no less tenderness, but it will have no cowardly complaisance; politeness will have no less attention and consideration, but it will have no mask and no hypocrisy. "Sanctity," says the Père de Neuville, "is never more in accordance with the world, than when it says anathema to those vices of the world which are so injurious to it. Nothing is so capable as sanctity to form a man perfect and accomplished according to the world. Sanctity is opposed, not to the duties and obligations, but to the abuses and scandals of the world*." In point of fact, this kind of sanctity constitutes the spirit of the bower. This can be proved.

And for my part I am inclined to think that if men throw all overboard which belongs to the juveniles, whatever sublime art they may propose to learn, whatever retreats they may be invited to make, whatever exercises to follow, whatever instructions to listen to, the chance of their succeeding to realize this type of perfection in their own character will be small indeed.

In conclusion, we may say of children and of the young, what this great orator predicates of the saints in the following remarkable words,—"qui sunt et unde venerunt?" The world itself will tell you that they have been in the world without

* Pour la Fête de tous les Saints.

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taking the spirit of the world, or being governed by its false maxims. They were rich without the love of riches; poor without envy; in the midst of a deceitful world, they were true and sincere; in an ambitious and interested world, they were without the desire of honours; in a hard and insensible world, they were tender and generous; in a haughty and insulting world, they were modest and considerate; in a sensual and voluptuous world, innocent and pure. We might go on to fill up the outlines of this portrait, by using those heavenly tints which consist in fidelity to the doctrine of the beatitudes:

"Verum hæc ipse equidem, spatiis exclusus iniquis,
Prætereo, atque aliis post commemoranda relinquo."

CHAPTER IX.

A BANK of wild flowers along a dusty road, will not invite, or at least persuade all persons to stop and recline on it. But there are little mites that desire nothing better for the moment, especially as they remember perhaps having had a serious guerilla fight at the very spot with small flint stones, repelling an unprovoked attack from sundry rustic juveniles no bigger than themselves. Their position in respect to the enemy on that memorable day, was no doubt favourable, as it commanded the road, by the gentle rise of the ground; but the assailants were better provided with ammunition. The unprovoked attack seemed to awaken martial propensities in little John, who gallantly headed our brigade. What was the casus belli, no one could say; but each side knew not how to find any natural expression for their respective opinions, except, as De Quincey says, "through discharges of stones, that being a language older than Hebrew or Sanscrit, and universally intelligible." Whatever may have become of the opposing heroes now, our little combatants have long in mind made it up with them. So here

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we are in undisturbed peace, to vary our scenery and "hold our bower," as it were, on the open plains, with nothing to interrupt our view of the whole blue vault of heaven; and by the way, let us observe, that it is generally the young who seem most pleased with the sky. If grown-up people, in their moments of utter idleness and insipidity, turn to it as a last resource, "which of its phenomena," asks a great author, "do they speak of? One says it has been wet, another, it has been windy. Who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and the precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday?" By children, the aerial scenery has not passed unregretted as unseen. They can describe it to you, and tell you all about its changes and its beauty. Seated then on the road-side thus, our little troop, when it condescends to turn to earth, seems prepared to laugh good-humouredly with the merry passengers from Cockayne that sweep by every half-hour, though by no means to scrutinize them with any sauciness. Indeed, a road is often a good scene to introduce some conversation about kind, good-humoured, charitable deeds and words; for it is on the highways of this hot world that many most need them.

Through these divisions of our subject, we are following what might be termed a visible, and not a philosophic order, noticing things just as they most prominently strike our eyes, and not ranking them according to the place which belongs to the principles from which they spring; or, in other words, instead of studying the seed or the root first, it is the shoot, or leaves and fruit of the plant and tree that we begin with.

Proceeding then to consider in detail, as any one may do, some of these highest virtues which can be learned from youth and childhood, the first that presents itself is charity, for the study and attainment of which all persons might be referred to them pre-eminently, as among its best and most effective teachers.

Charity strikes our attention even before we think of faith, because its leaves, and blossoms, and fruits are so beautiful to the least cultivated eye, that we cannot engage in examining its root until we have pleased ourselves with admiring them; and, in fact, though we may not be aware of it, these delicate

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charms are among the first attractions which draw and rivet us to the Children's Bower.

I know, indeed, that all these are trite subjects, worn out by men of the pen; by no one, perhaps, rendered more insipid, through repetition and citations, than by the author of these sheets; but as nature's oldest sights and stories seem new to those weary of them, when they remark the lively impressions that they produce on the fresh minds of the young to whom they are novel, so may all these things, however long familiar, sparkle out afresh, and acquire the charm of originality, when we view them, as it were, from this bower, and observe their wonderful affinities with the affections and actions, with the thoughts and language, with the spirit, or, if we prefer such a term, with the genius of childhood and of youth.

Charity, as learned from the Children's Bower, may be divided into two branches. It may be observed, first, as the disposition to pity and forgive offenders, to understand the forgiveness of men for faults, transgressions, and mistakes; to pity men as debtors, as prodigal sons, as outcasts, as victims of error; to pardon them, and to bless God for pardoning them. This is the first division of our theme. It may be considered, secondly, as being the disposition to pity men for their afflictions, for their wants and miseries, as the poor and the unhappy; and this will form the second part of the present chapter.

What are often the grown-up persons, who come as strangers to the bower, in regard to the first of these dispositions? It is the remark of St. Augustin, "that God does not esteem man so little, as one man esteems another man*." Contempt of man is the spirit of what is called the world; and in allusion to this need of what is taught here, we may repeat the poet's words, and say,

> "——— childhood teaches also this;
> Another lesson with my 'children' came,
> I have unlearn'd contempt. It is the sin
> That is engender'd earliest in the soul,
> And doth beset it like a poison-worm,
> Feeding on all its beauty. As it steals

* In Ps. cxliii.

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Into the bosom, you may see the light
Of the clear, heavenly eye grow cold and dim,
And the fine, upright glory of the brow,
Cloud with mistrust, and the unfetter'd lip,
That was as free and changeful as the wind,
Even in sadness redolent of love,
Curl'd with the iciness of a constant scorn.
It eats into the mind, till it pollutes
All its pure fountains. Feeling, reason, taste,
Breathe of its chill corruption. Every sense
That could convey a pleasure is benumb'd,
And the bright human being, that was made
Full of all warm affections, and with power
To look through all things lovely up to God,
Is changed into a cold and doubting fiend,
With but one use for reason,—to despise *."

The grown-up world forgives not. As Overbury says, "Usque ad ultimum quadrantem," is the period of all its charity. It says the Lord's Prayer backwards, or rather, it hath a Pater noster of its own, and that particle, "forgive us as we forgive others," it either quite leaves out, or else leaps over it. It is a dangerous rub in the alloy of its conscience. If they who ever injured it were only as dear to heaven as to it, the dogs and vultures would soon eat them, according to the amiable suggestion of the blind Homer. In fact, if you believe Saint-Simon, the Duchesse de Nemours verified all this to the letter. She could not pardon, and when she used to be asked if she ever said the Pater, she replied, "yes, but that she always skipt the article about forgiving enemies †." The grown-up world speaks through Cæsar, saying, that some things alleged in excuse of others

"Might fire the blood of ordinary men,
And turn pre-ordinance and first decree
Into the law of children."

But it will not be thawed from the true quality with that which melteth them. In brief, and in point of fact, as an old writer said of some, "such is its charity that it never owes any man

* Willis. † vi. 1.

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any ill-will, making present payment thereof." Each man of mature age in the little kingdom, or rather, as we should oftener say, democracy of his own mind, resembles that Roman republic which, as Marius told the envoys of Bocchus, "never forgets injuries;" and one may fear, too, that he carries away with him to the other world the same spirit, so that were he to be entreated even there to pardon some real or imaginary affront, he would act like Ajax in the Odyssey, of whom Ulysses says,

—— ὁ δέ μ' οὐδὲν ἀμείβετο, βῆ δὲ μετ' ἄλλας
ψυχὰς εἰς Ἔρεβος νεκύων κατατεθνειώτων.

We need not multiply words to show that this is a most lamentable state of mind to be in, whether in this world or the next, since every thing but mean, cowardly, dirty passion cries out against it; but it will be well to hear how it is spoken of by those who are the best entitled to be heard; and really some of their words, if learned by heart, would make children of us all in regard to forgiveness, rendering every one of us young and happy. "What are you to fear," asks St. Augustin, "when you have an enemy? What you are to fear, then, is lest your love for him should be shaken. It is a great advantage to have an enemy, that you may love him and obey Christ. Let the indulgence of God towards the wicked, whom He pardons, serve you and enable you to obtain mercy, for you have needed it. Let Him pardon others as He has done you; for after you had passed, He did not close this door of goodness and sweetness which had been opened for you*." What on earth do these last admonitions mean? Children, and those who in themselves as in a glass will look on human frailty, might well ask the question. But history and experience supply the answer. It is that grown-up men not only find it often impossible to forgive any who have offended against their own notions of right, but they are indignant when they hear that God will forgive those who have trespassed against the laws promulgated by Himself. Indeed, the prophet expressly declares, that it is in respect to this very property of showing mercy to those who have offended, that "the thoughts of God are not as man's thoughts, nor his ways as man's ways†."

* In Ps. liv.

† Isa. lv.

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And history as well as daily experience verify the sentence; for we have still voices which proclaim that the panacea for all social evils is an irreconcilable, inexorable enmity to those who do not deserve pity. At the end of the second century, the Montanists dared to cut off from many copies of the New Testament the page which represents the woman taken in adultery kneeling before our Saviour to receive pardon. This sacrilegious suppression was the consequence of their austerely resisting and calumniating the Catholic Church for receiving sinners *. Even in the fifth century, Nonnos, a Greek of Panopolis, in his versified translation of the gospel of St. John, prodigally employing in this elegant and melodious poem epithets artistically constructed and brilliant images, left out the narrative of the adulteress, the rigour of the ascetics of the Thebaid not understanding better the mercy of the divine legislator; and it was reserved for a learned monk of the sixteenth century, who gave an edition of the poem, to repair this omission, by transferring to the same Greek hexameters the chapter which this charming Nonnos had left out †. It was to guard against the infusion of this spirit, that the Apostolic Canons decreed as follows; "If a bishop or a priest does not receive one converted from his sins, but rejects him, let him be deposed; because he afflicts the Christ who has said, 'There is joy in heaven for the sinner who repents of his faults.'" It was to serve as a symbol of this discipline, that the Christian artists of the primitive Church represented often a goat with the sheep. In a very old painting in the catacomb of St. Callisto, the good shepherd stands between a goat and a sheep, but the sheep occupies only the second place, being on his left hand, while the goat fills the place of honour on his right, which representation is explained by reference to the parable of the Prodigal Son ‡. To attest the importance of the same lesson, the ancient liturgies abound with passages, as in the hymn for St. Mary Magdalen's Day:

"O vera, Christe, charitas,
In nostra purga crimina,
Tu corda reple gratia,
Tu redde cœli præmia;"

* Cruice, Hist. de l'Eglis. Rom. 335.
† Villemain, Rapports académiques, 1853.
‡ Northcote, The Roman Catacombs.

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and again,

"Jesu, dulce refugium,
Spes una pœnitentium,
Per peccatricis meritum,
Peccati solve debitum;"

and again,

"Pia mater et humilis,
Naturæ memor fragilis,
In hujus vitæ fluctibus,
Nos rege tuis precibus;"

and again,

"Uni Deo sit gloria,
Pro multi formi gratia,
Qui culpas et supplicia
Remittit, et dat præmia. Amen."

How deeply a sense of the same doctrine of charity had pervaded the ecclesiastical mind, may be witnessed also in the prose of which Gerson cites the words addressed to the blessed Virgin:

"Nec abhorre peccatores
Sine quibus nunquam fores
Tali digna Filio *."

Chaucer shows this spirit in action, when he says of his poor Persoun,

"And though he holy were and virtuous,
He was to senful man nought dispitous."

But perhaps we shall be told to look back to past times, and confess the inconsistency of such views with the austerity of penance which used then to be practised. Such severity was mostly self-imposed. Gerson tells us that he generally required only a Pater and an Ave at bed-time; and he says, "I prefer, after the example of William of Paris, by a small penance that will be done sending men to purgatory, which, remember, with all its suffering, implies peace and beatific assurance, than by imposing one that they will not perform, precipitating them into a place which knows of neither †."

When we leave the bower for the wise people of the world, we find that as in the second, so in the nineteenth century, the charity of the Church and the mercy of God, in pardoning

* Tract. x. super Magnificat. † De Parvulis ad C. trahend.

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men, continue to furnish ground for angry comment, for contemptuous attacks, or protestation. Nor is it alone the profane who take their stand upon it. There are grown-up pious persons who often make us feel as if in their company we were not living with human creatures, but with beings of another order, cold, passionless, and inflexible, who are to take part in judgment against us in the next life,—beings, not indeed on that account divine, as Plato would say, but whose province it is to survey us with superhuman eyes, and threaten us, and destroy each germ of hope as it rises in our breast. Very unlike are they to the young, but also very dissimilar to those commissioned to direct the great human family. "Thou wilt save the people humble and poor," said the Psalmist; "and that," adds St. Augustin, as if he were writing at the present day, "is what unjust and corrupt, (and he might add such pious,) persons find unjust, that Thou shouldst save those who accuse themselves of their sins *."

"——————— yet certes He
Er we were born knew al our frelté."

"'All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth.' David says much in saying this," adds the same Augustin; "the mercy of God is not in his not considering our crimes, but in pardoning us and promising eternal life,—his truth in doing what He has promised †: 'Qui eduxit vinctos in fortitudine; similiter eos qui exasperant, qui habitant in sepulchris ‡.'" He saves those who are rebellious to Him, and who lie in the tomb. "I have said to the unjust, Do not commit injustice §." "To the unjust," for He came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance. The Church at the beginning of Lent, addressing God, exclaims, "Benigna est misericordia tua." Of men the very mercy is frequently sullen, fretful, equivocal, only for half-measures, often harsh, and cruel. The mercy of God is benign. "In a word," says St. Augustin, "what gives us hope is that God has taken care of human nature in uniting it to Jesus Christ ‖." And therefore the Psalmist says, "For it is not in vain that you have created all the children of men ¶."

* In Ps. xvii. † Ib. lx. ‡ Ib. lxvii.
§ Ib. lxxiv. ‖ Ib. iii. ¶ Ib. lxxxviii.

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"God never fails of his word," says an old author, "but where He threatens ill to man, as in punishing Ninevye." "Remark," says the Père Boutauld, "that the last and lowest state in which man can be is that of great sin, and that the highest and most divine state in which God can be is that of great mercy. God and man are arrived at this last extremity of height and lowness on the day of the Passion,—man in crucifying the Saviour, and God the Father in beholding shed this blood. I have not much to say," he continues, "on the subject. You may contemplate it. All that can be said respecting it is included in the words of David, 'that there are in man great sins, and in God a great mercy.' Truly great and adorable mercy, which has no limits, and which, since six thousand years, has seen no crime on the earth which it has not been ready to forget if the sinner would have repented, and which now beholds none in hell which it would not pardon if the demons and the damned would subdue their pride and ask this grace, and make an act of contrition and humility, without which pardon itself could do nothing for them. 'Ad quem ibimus?' said St. Peter, 'verba vitæ æternæ habes.' 'To whom shall I go but to Thee?' You have great sins; you have need of a great mercy. Go to Calvary. There is the only place where it is found, the only spot where you ought to seek it. 'Miserere mei secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.' I do not implore the mercy of angels and saints, nor the mercy of a God glorious in heaven; I have need of the great and supreme mercy which, owing to a mystery unfathomable by human reason, though not contrary to it as some would foolishly pretend, is found alone in a God crucified *." "Tota spes mea," says St. Augustin, than whom no one ever pierced deeper into nature, "in morte Domini mei; mors ejus meritum meum, et refugium meum, salus, vita, et resurrectio mea. Peccavi peccatum grande, et multorum tum mihi conscius delictorum, sed non despero; quoniam ubi abundaverant delicta, superabundavit et gratia. Qui de venia peccatorum desperat, negat deum esse misericordem. Magnam injuriam Deo facit, qui de ejus misericordia diffidit." Assuredly,

* Les Conseilles de la Sagesse.

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let our rationalists say what they please, this is sublime doctrine, most profound, and yet most accordant with the aspirations of nature. But what have children to do with it? A great deal! It is exactly what they want to hear. Translate it for them, and they understand it, receive it, adore it. Not that they have personal reasons for thinking about its application as affecting themselves more than others; but that they wish from their hearts all men to be saved, and they believe that some whom they remember at least with fondness may need it greatly; for they have heard of poor Harry, that was such a good-natured lad, having been naughty, and of Dick that used to play with them, and of Alice that was so kind a girl, and of Will, and of some others; and they do not know what they have done, but they say they hear there's tricks in the world; and they know that old people are very angry, and they are sure that it is with reason; and they fear that their former friends may have offended grievously, and they say a Pater and an Ave for them every night and morning; and they would themselves die of grief if they thought that God would not pardon them. But hearing this "good news" from lips inspired, they know that He does; and if they must comply with orders, and think evil of others who are merry and thoughtless before them, they will see them as in the picture by Lucas of Leyden, called the Dance of the Magdalen, with an anticipative glory round their heads. Now, if young people taught us nothing else, it would be much to learn from them to look on transgressors thus.

Here then already you see the difference, and can appreciate the importance of the bower lessons. For grown-up men and wise men, little accustomed to breathe love as vital air, will not deem it expedient for them to imitate this forgiveness of God and this charity of the Church in receiving sinners.

> "The dove the dove, the swan doth love the swan,
> Nought so relentless unto man as man *."

Therefore, turning to consider these proud despisers of their brethren, the holy fathers proceed to show the danger and

* Drummond of Hawthornden.

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iniquity of such views, so opposed to the sacred command, "Despise not a man that turneth away from sin, nor reproach him therewith; remember that we are all worthy of reproof*."

"If you are the good grain," says St. Augustin, "tolerate the weeds. If you are the wheat, tolerate the chaff†. If," he continues, "it be a sinful man that inveighs against a sinful woman, alas! let him not give way to anger; rather let him confess his own sins; let him leave her. God knows what to do,—knows how to cure and pardon her. When she was presented to Christ, He stooped and wrote on the earth. Before He stooped, it was not on the earth He wrote, but on stone. Earth was to bear some fruit by the impress of these letters of Jesus Christ. God wrote the law on stone, to mark the hardness of the Jews; He now writes on earth, to denote the fruit that Christians ought to bear. Show mercy to all. But what mercy can you show a just person? Suppose you have even found him, what will you give him? God takes care of his servants, and in supplying their necessities you provide for your own salvation. But show mercy to the unjust and sinners, not as being unjust and sinners, but as being victims who may be yet restored‡." How just are these admonitions! And observe how even modern science seems coming forward to attest it. Witness, for instance, what says the author of the Revelations of Prison Life. "He has had a rare experience of human frailty; and at the end of a quarter-century of command in the largest English prison, he believes in human virtue like a youthful poet. He has lived with the felon, has grown familiar with vice, has looked into the darkest sepulchres of the heart without finding reason to despair of mankind. In his belief the worst of men have still some of the angel left." "Such a testimony," says a reviewer, "from such a quarter, is full of novelty as it is of interest." I heard a venerable priest, who had attended many to the scaffold, say, "that it is the general case with men of his blessed order to contract a positive affection for the sufferer on these occasions. They sit and chat with him for days; they talk on common subjects; they even joke and laugh together. Then the fatal morning comes. He

* Eccles. viii. 6. † In Ps. xl. ‡ Ib. cii.

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dies; and they feel as if it was they themselves who had been cut off." The children are not so wrong then after all. In fact, while men describe their fellows as the old landscape-painters represented nature, with only black masses to form a contrast to their sky, the young are like those later artists whom Ruskin so commends, who can read that multitudinous, symmetrical retirement of nature between distances, being not more careful to separate her nearest bush from her farthest one, than to separate the nearest bough of that bush from the one next to it. They do not see all things in black and white; they see gradations, and can detect some beauty in the darkest shade. In that respect, to be sure, they had high authority from the first for being what they are, since it is written, "Esto misericors, et eris tu velut filius Altissimi *."

"When I say," writes St. Augustin, "that a man is a violator of the law, I say two things; I say that he is a man, and I say that he is a law-breaker. God made the man; and the man made the law-breaker. Efface if you can what man has added, but love in him what God has made †." God hates the detractor and accuser, the whisperer and the sower of hatred, which men too hate, for "susurro in omnibus odietur." Well, seek not to please him by spreading the shame of another. "Sex sunt quæ odit Dominus, et supremum detestatur anima ejus, scilicet, eum qui seminat inter fratres discordias." We should look on men in their relation to the common Parent of the human race, as Lactantius says. We should look on what is good in them, and not on the evil alone. St. Paul, like St. Peter and the other apostles, came from the synagogue. "Therefore," says St. Augustin, "when you hear the voice of the ancient synagogue, do not stop to consider what it merits by its crimes, but look at the children that it has brought forth ‡." In fine, invoking One who was the image of such love, a poet cries—

"Let thy sweet radiance shine rekindled here,
And all we cherish grow more truly dear.
Here in the gates of Death's o'erhanging vault,
Oh, teach us kindness for our brother's fault,

---

* Eccles. iv. † In Ps. c. ‡ Ib. lxxii.

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Lay all our wrongs beneath this peaceful sod,
And lead our hearts to Mercy and its God!"

"Faith," says St. Augustin, "will be no more when we shall see what we believed in. Hope will be no more when we possess what we had hoped for. But charity will not be at an end like these; it will subsist for ever*. Show mercy," he adds; "there is no other bond of charity. There is no other carriage by which you can pass from this unhappy life to your eternal country†. Hold fast what you hold. Keep charity. Charity is the end of the law. Do not attend to the multitude of branches. Hold you firm to the root; and you will be master of the whole tree‡." "Of course what I did was against the canon law," said an aged holy priest, relating some adventure of his missionary life (it was the same whom Tom sent for when he was dying); "but what could I do? What could I say to these poor creatures? All law is superseded by charity."

Such then is the importance of one part of the lesson taught and exemplified in the bower, where no one thinks it possible for God or man not to forgive, still less that the only legitimate use of rhetoric is to provide against an enemy and unjust person suffering punishment, wishing that he may be immortal in depravity and never suffer here for his injustice, according to the doctrine of Socrates, of which the sublimity cannot compensate for the exquisite malice which seems to prompt the advice contained in it§.

So now you have heard what is laid down by the ancient fathers, and by those who retain their spirit. Is this charity too hard for you? Can nothing "kindle in that barren heart love and forgiveness?" "What!" as Warwick demands of Beaufort, "shall a child instruct you what you ought to do?" Cicero might urge the same taunt, "Quid! ergo hoc pueri possunt viri non poterunt?"

But have boys and girls really such thoughts? Well, let us attend to them, and observe for ourselves. We have already seen that children and young people do in point of fact find the lesson of forgiveness, as far as they are personally concerned,

* In Ps. xci. † Ib. cii. ‡ Ib.
§ Gorgias.

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very easy; it seems to them like the spontaneous voice of nature; they admire it, and they practise it. A child forgives from his heart. A child or a youth, therefore, does not litigate. If left to his own suggestions he has nothing to do in the law courts; he practises in a way of his own the precept, "Si quis voluerit tecum judicio contendere, et tunicam tuam tollere, relinque illi et pallium." If he can't keep it with his own hands, or the intervention of his father, he gives up the game at once. In general he does not care for the things through the love of which men bring their actions. A chancery suit for any thing he feels an interest in would be out of the question; and, as for a bailiff, he would sooner trip up his heels than commission him to enter any house. Has the bower, then, nothing to teach manhood? We find here already established, in a sweet natural way, what Plato so vainly ascribed to the manners of his perfect republic. "There is nothing," says St. Augustin, "more like the acts of demons than to go to law." There is nothing so like the acts of youth as to refrain from doing so. But amongst grown-up people there is no descent more easy than this, if there be neither the spirit of youth nor that of the old Christianity to restrain them. Cardinal Palæotus, in his sermon to the lawyers and arbitrators of Bologna, seems indeed to expect in his audience much of both *; but it is to be feared that one cannot at present so easily discern at Westminster or Lincoln's Inn a tendency to transfer to the world the notions and manners, in this respect, of the Children's Bower. However, be that as it may, the child or youth, when ill-treated, is always ready to pardon. He has no fees for lawyers, and no black book in his pocket to inscribe any person's name in. He has no ill will let him have suffered what he may. When Jules Quinque was dying at St. Acheul, he was advised to write to a certain young man who had injured him, and say that he forgave him. "No," said he, "lest he should think he had injured me; and, after all, perhaps he never meant it." Youth, in a small way at least, would lose an occasion of practising this virtue, which is now too often presented, if its teachers observed the rules laid down for them by Gerson when instructing the tutor of the dauphin.

* Sermo ad Advocatos. Serm. ad Disceptantes Litibus in Judicio.

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"Let the tutor," he says, "take great care lest by any signs, words, or deeds he should make himself odious to his pupil, and consequently cause him to contract an aversion for all study. Let him in regard to puerile defects be often 'sicut homo non audiens et non habens in ore suo redargutiones;' nor let him listen to the accusations of others calling on him to blame and correct; for such charges oftener proceed from ignorance and malice than from prudence and the benevolence of sincere charity. He should remember that 'ingenium nobile plus duci vult quam trahi, et laude pasci suaviter, quam rigida quadam tyrannide coarctari*.'" Unhappily it is not always by such rules that masters act towards their pupils; but what we have to remark is the forgiveness practised by the latter. Charles de Pichard had been unjustly treated at an examination in his college; and the prize, to which every one knew he was entitled, was given to another. He never complained or showed the least resentment against the professor who had acted so. Some days after, travelling with his father, he met on the road this very man, and instead of avoiding he ran up and saluted him affectionately as a dearest friend, and the next morning went to call on him at the inn, and asked him if he could be of any service to him. "What!" said he, "do you think I am angry with him? No doubt he did what he thought right, and probably I was not entitled to the prize." Many other instances might be cited, but it is as well, perhaps, to pass them over, and return to the practice of forgiveness to which the ordinary occurrences of juvenile life may give occasion. Our Thomas, whose memory will ever recur when it is a subject of this kind that is considered, who, as we have already observed, could distrust no one, having in him that fund of honest gullibility without which, as Sterne says, "a man is always so much the worse," who, when imposed upon, would not believe that it was intentionally done, always ascribing the fault to himself, as if it arose from some mistake of his own (and all his mistakes were of the same kind, so that it was impossible to be angry with him), ever finding, as he did, some excuse for the false stranger, was always anxious to manifest how thoroughly he forgave

* Instruct. ad Magist. Joan. Majorem.

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whatever might have been committed against himself. But he never dreamt that he had any merit on that account; for his own conviction appeared to be that in reality whatever others might tell him, he had nothing to forgive, no one to pardon. As he never affronted or insulted any one, so he seemed to think that he could not himself be either affronted or insulted. It never appeared to him that he had "an inch of any ground to build a grief on." When told of what was said of him by some whose calumnies were the simple invention of persons who little knew him, while wishing him to be like themselves, he used only to laugh, and remark that they thought to compliment him. Full of sorrow and contrition for what faults he might really commit, of which he was the farthest from making boast,—for what the world might say of him falsely whether in life or after his death, he never cared for an instant; as if he really expected that every one else would be able to read his conscience as well as he could himself. He was willing to be treated as he fancied he deserved to be; and he could find no one that did not seem to be just towards him in that respect. He knew none of those pleasures of sulkiness that Elia describes with such penetration. He never conceived himself neglected, or suspected his friend of an injustice, or all his friends of being in a conspiracy to depress and undervalue him,—that he was himself the only possible friend in a world incapable of that communion, and that all persons but himself are unjust. No doubt he had to endure what is usually inflicted on the good-tempered, who are incapable of sulks; but after all, the fact was that he never had an enemy, neither an angry equal nor a superior consciously contemptuous. Was any one, high or low, accused in his hearing, without any proof of the offence being given? He would defend him as if he was his father. Was any one blamed, as in the company of grown-up people some one is always blamed? He would find some dexterous and gentle way of making his apology. Ἤπιος *aἰεί*, he not only forgave from his own heart, but he could not understand how any one else should withhold forgiveness. When he found that he could not prevail,—for of course on such subjects no one ever listens to a fellow like him,—he would lapse into silence, look grave for an instant, then leave the room, and whistle as he went his way; it

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being no wrong occasion, in fact, for what Sterne calls the "argumentum fistulatorium."

But the lesson of charity obtained at the bower has a wider extension in its first part, than we have hitherto witnessed in action among the young. It implies, besides the childish love that we before remarked, a generous and diffusive good will towards all men, irrespective of distinctions, and a willingness to believe that God forgives. "Some years ago," says a great author, "as I was talking of the curvilinear forms in a piece of rock to one of our academicians, he said to me, in a somewhat despondent accent, 'If you look for curves, you will see curves; if you look for angles, you will see angles.' It was the saying of an experienced man, and in many ways true. In all things throughout the world, the men who look for the crooked will see the crooked, and the men who look for the straight will see the straight *." "I call that man wise," said Socrates, "who, changing the aspect of objects to any of us, to whom they appear and are evil, causes them to appear and to be good †." The early habits of the bower might teach us all, that life, with its perplexities, is to be regarded, as an amiable author says, "not in spleen, or in sorrow, or in narrowness of any kind, but with a cheerfulness befitting childhood, a manliness befitting a man, and with that calm and loving wisdom in age, which discerns so much beauty and goodness in the face of nature, that it cannot doubt the benevolence of her Creator ‡."

Men grown up and initiated in the world's wisdom are not only, as we have observed, slow to forgive and to comprehend the divinity of God's forgiveness, but they are prone to think the worst of each other, learning to take things ill which are not so—to suspect and accuse mankind, forgetting the fact proclaimed by St. Augustin in the noble words, "Ubi caritas non est, non potest esse justitia;" and, practically at least, to allow of exemption from blame only in favour of themselves. For one who resembles our Thomas in thinking the best of every man, there are a thousand who must rank with the vulgar, as Tacitus paints it in the words "est vulgus ad deteriora promptum." Praise

* Ruskin. † Théætet.

‡ Leigh Hunt, A Book for a Corner.

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any one in their presence; choose whom you will, and you may reckon it a great matter if they only hear you in silence, perhaps with a kind of grim smile. It is a great effort they make, when they do not openly disparage him. For all your pains, when your back is turned, you will never again pass with them for a sagacious fellow, whatever they may have thought you before. What a charming world such persons contrive to make even of a Christian one, and, above all, of what is called a religious one! A youth is seldom like Dr. Slop, who, from the first innocent words you utter, can distinguish "your church" from "his church." Youth, moreover, in general, possesses what the grown-up world of England so terribly wants,—that kind of oil of gladness which keeps every thing going in noiseless combined action—that sort of unction which Madame de Staël called the "bonhommie du midi." Whether the question be about a picture or a book, a building or a pamphlet, the probable result of showing it to the mature public in this country, is a move, or rather a rush, to pull it in pieces, and to demolish the author's character with it. All but the young, who can find something sweetly pretty every where, proceed to point out the deformity and the error, snarling, and growling, and biting, and seeking to embitter the life of the unhappy persons connected with it; keeping up against them a kind of running fire of letters in the newspapers, and vying with each other as to who can sting most fatally with a smooth approach. There will be then "so much satire and sarcasm, scoffing and flouting, with rallying and reparteeing of it, thrusting and parrying in one corner or another, that a work of genius, as some one says, had better go at once to—no matter where,—than stand to be prick'd and tortured to death by them." Whereas, in the South, instead of this delectable state of things, you will have some kind soul showing you, like a boy, a new thing to admire every hour of the day. It will be some poor penny print or threepenny pamphlet; old people, like the young, finding good in every thing, beauty in every thing; winking very hard at defects, and pointing out, at least, the best of intentions where the work in itself cannot be praised. This is the spirit that we can learn from the Children's Bower, without going to the south of Europe for it. We can procure for ourselves there the immense

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privilege of not esteeming it our duty to disparage and defame people right and left. We shall obtain the good will that will enable us to let a thing drop if we don't like it, instead of fastening on it, like certain religious writers, to keep throwing it from one to the other, for the purpose of deep ill-natured annoyance, under the cloak of a proper regard to truth, and the vast importance of our maintaining, by such means, the right principle. There are more Pharisees in this respect at the present day, than one generally supposes. "I thank Thee, said the Pharisee,—so far all well," observes St. Augustin, "that I am not like the rest of men. Why add that? The pleasure that you have in being good, arises from thinking that others are bad. What does he add further? They are unjust, robbers, adulterers, like this publican. This is no longer to rejoice in God, but cruelly to insult over men. It is but little to recognize that what you have comes from God, if you do not at the same take care not to raise yourself above another who has not as yet received it*." "Mr. Perkins," says Fuller, "would pronounce the word damn with such an emphasis, as left a doleful echo in his auditors' ears; though in his older age he altered his voice, and remitted much of his former rigidness; professing that to preach mercy was the proper object of the minister of the Gospel." But the world is so wicked! This city is so wicked! Well, are there no children in it? no poor, no women? no good spirits in it? Let the number be thought ever so small, "there is no place," says Baldesanus, "which does not nourish some good men†." And, moreover, a great theologian says, that God acts towards all as if He thinks better of us than we think even of ourselves. "Elias, though a prophet, was tempted," as St. Augustin says, "with a contrary thought, and he said to God, as St. Paul relates, Lord, they have slain thy prophets, they have destroyed thy altars. I am left alone. But what did God reply? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bent a knee to Baal. God did not say, You have still two or three like yourself; you think, He said, that you are left alone; there are seven thousand, and you think

* In Ps. lxx.

† Baldes. Stimul. Virtut. Adolescentiæ Christianæ.

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that it is only you who do not adore Baal. Hear then, dear brethren," continues St. Augustin, "what I have to say to you. Let him who is still wicked, not fancy that there is no one good; and let him who is good, not believe that no one else but himself is good. Let him who is wicked, and feels that his conscience can only render an evil testimony, not suppose that there is no one good; and let not the good man fancy that there is no one else good but himself *." "We have neighbours," says St. Augustin, "in those who are not yet within the Church,—that is why we, who do not know the future, look then generally on every man as being our neighbour, not only by the quality of man, and in regard to a common origin, but also by the hope of the same inheritance, since we know not what this man, who is now nothing, may one day become †."

Swedenborg shuts up the English souls in a heaven by themselves. Grown-up men, when they think of it at all, are apt to speak and act as if they really aspired to such exclusions in the other world. But there is nothing more genial to nature and the human mind than diversity. "The divine sage, St. Paul," as Charron remarks, "gives us all freedom in these words, 'Let every one abound in his sense, and let no one judge or condemn him who does otherwise ‡.'" To see this spirit in action, one had only to observe our Thomas. It was not that charity, as the Duc de Saint-Simon says, "kept him shut up in a bottle;" he had eyes and sharpness like another; but it was that he could not find in himself to blame and find fault without some great necessity. As for finding evil in good, like so many elder people, though only some two hundred years ago his family could boast of an alchymist, it was a thing beyond his powers. "Moderation," as an old writer says, "is not a halting betwixt two opinions, which children are never caught doing. Such we count not of a moderate judgment, but of an immoderate unsettledness." But what is important for us all to learn, is the lesson of the bower,—the habit of exaggerating no evil, and of not taking the balance from God's hands to weigh and estimate the souls of our brethren.

The young might teach us never to do this, but rather to love

* In Ps. xxv. † Ib. ‡ Charron, De la Sagesse.

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most, to pity some, to hate none; and therefore, from watching what passes in the minds of children, men can learn the importance of being like them, even in regard to a desire of praying with every one else, without thinking about whether they are good or not. "Frequently it happens," says Gerson, "that prayer offered up in the common assembly of sinners, is more efficacious than when said in private; just as poor people often get more alms from being found asking along with others more miserable and sickly than themselves, in fulfilment of the apostolic words, 'Ubi abundavit peccatum ibi superabundavit et gratia.' Sinners, therefore," he adds, "when praying, unless excommunicated, are not to be shunned; nor are we only to communicate with them in corporal things, but also in spirituals, for the reason above mentioned*."

Again, men long grown up, and often sincere in their melancholy aspirations towards a happier state, are apt to grow selfish even in their religion. Alas! can we wonder at it? How often is the mature man

> "———————— a sordid, solitary thing,
> 'Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart.
> Through courts and cities the smooth savage roams,
> Feeling himself, his own low self the whole†."

How selfish often are the learned! A boy will proffer his advice, and volunteer his help on every occasion. Not so the wary philosopher. When you come to him in a case of great personal need and anguish, he actually effaces himself to escape from being called upon to advise or help you. He knows nothing about it. He really knows nobody. The clever, influential man that you thought him vanishes. What remains in your presence is only a poor unknowing and unknown creature. He dare not advise; he cannot assist you. He politely withdraws, and leaves you to face your misery alone as best you can; and if he can help it, you won't see him again for a week. In religion, this disposition shows itself forgetful of the first elements, forgetful of the meaning of the first words of our Lord's

* De Mendicitate spirituali. † Coleridge.

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prayer,—Our Father, not my Father; Our daily bread, not my daily bread. Some modern books of devotion, if a common wight might venture to give an opinion on such subjects, seem framed for persons who are all engrossed about themselves. The ancient Christian formulas suppose those who use them to be engrossed with the salvation of the human race. In the one we find only I, me, my, mine; in the latter it is We, us, our, —"miserere nobis, dona nobis," &c. True, the Psalmist, as the author of the Imitation, uses Ego and Me; but they speak, we are told, either in the name of all sinners, or in the name of the Saviour: "Lord, have mercy on me*." "Why," asks St. Augustin, "does he not say, Have mercy on us, as if many poor cried out together? Why does he say, as if there was only one poor person in distress, Have mercy on me? It is because there is only one who, from being rich, as He was, made Himself poor for us †." "That man of the Psalms," he says elsewhere, "is also many men who are one in the Church, and many in the Church through which this one is diffused ‡."

In fine, as far as respects this first part of the subject, the charity which all ought to learn, and which is taught in the Children's Bower as if by instinct, implies union even in a social sense, and the absence of the disparaging, intolerant, and persecuting spirit.

"Those who have not charity," says St. Augustin, "cannot live together. When in one place they become odious to each other, troublesome, turbulent, importunate, backbiters, contradictors; they are like vicious horses that when yoked with others, instead of helping to draw, kick and plunge, so as to break the harness; but he who has received the divine dew of Hermon is peaceable, tranquil, humble, tolerant §." Where charity reigns, each thing, great or small, is viewed and spoken of in its relation to others as well as to our own persons; as when children and common people, to cite a trivial instance, but expressive of this spirit, write to each other, saying, "The weather here burns us up to death," meaning all the inhabitants

* Ps. ix.
† In Ps. ix.
‡ Ib. ci.
§ In Ps. cxxxii.

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of the city in which they are living, with whom they are thus for making common cause, as if neighbourhood had really constituted them one family.

Hastening, however, to notice the most practically important part of this lesson, let us pass on to observe how it teaches a horror of the persecuting spirit, and of all that appertains to that disposition.

Intolerance and persecution assume many different forms; and there are few men wholly brought up amidst books, and advanced to maturity, who do not in some point or other, however they may talk at times, contract a stain from them, and betray an affinity with the state of mind from which they spring. Around them they find nothing right; and they would make all things straight by human means, by force and constraint, perhaps even by war and acts of destruction, either against persons or things; they would leave nothing to depend on the conscience or will of others, and trust as little as possible to God's providential care. Lactantius, after relating how the impious books of Numa were burnt by the pretor, adds, "insipienter id quidem;" for what use was it to burn the books, when the fact itself for which they were burnt, as derogatory to religion, was handed down to memory? "No one then in the senate who was not most foolish; for the books might be abolished, and the fact not be handed down; but while they wished posterity to approve of them as defending religion, they impaired the authority of religion itself." The truth, however, is, that acts of destruction and persecution are generally the result of many other desires and motives, besides those of attending to the interest of religion, which in these cases are often merely used as a cloak. It is private spite, or the mere dictate of a passionate disposition, seeking a plausible motive for its gratification, or political ambition, or a view to the indulgence of some rancorous party feeling, or perhaps of some fanaticism resulting from an isolated life with thought,—that prompts it; and, accordingly, we find that historians, who are in no way favourable to the cause of religion, have no hesitation in proclaiming that those persons who were really influenced by religion, execrated and detested measures of persecution whenever they were adopted. "An immense number of Catho-

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lics," says Michelet, "abhorred the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The public executioners refused to assist, declaring they never killed but in the name of justice. At Lyons and other cities the soldiers refused to fire, declaring that they never killed except in war. Along the Rhône the Catholics, as the victims of Lyons floated down, uttered cries of horror, and invoked God's vengeance on the assassins." While dramatists, copying from the life, were representing some villains when exposed in England, exclaiming, "Oh, morbleu! Begar, me must run to some oder country now for my religion," Christine, queen of Sweden, hearing of the revocation of the edict of Nantes, wrote from Rome on the 2nd of February, 1687, in these terms: "The project of converting others is very praiseworthy, but the mode is new; and, as our Lord did not use this method to convert the world, it can hardly be the best. I admire, and do not comprehend this zeal and policy above my capacity, and I am satisfied at not comprehending it. I have as much at heart, as my own life, the common interest of the Church, but it is precisely this interest which makes me regard what has happened with sorrow*." Clearly all this is in harmony with the youthful mind; this is what young people would say, and this is what they can understand. They will admire that Pope, Paul III., interceding with Francis I. in favour of the Protestants, and demanding for them grace and pardon. They will love the memory of Henry IV. for that edict, of which the suppression caused such sorrows and such scandals. They will clap their hands when told of that Cardinal de Coislin, bishop of Orleans, who, when the regiment of dragoons came to his city, to convert the Huguenots of his diocese, took all the horses into his own stables, insisted on lodging the officers in his own palace, and on charging himself with supplying, out of his own pocket, whatever the privates might desire, provided they were not billeted on a single Huguenot†. They will heartily praise the Maréchal d'Estrées, nephew of the cardinal, for saying to a certain grave personage,

* Le P. Lacordaire, De la Loi de l'Histoire, en Récueil de l'Académie de Legislation de Toulouse, tom. iii.

† Mém. de Saint-Simon, v. 115.

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who insisted on the necessity of having the Inquisition established in France, that if it were not for the respect he felt for the house in which they were sitting, he would have him thrown out of the window; and they will admire the Duc de Saint-Simon himself, who relates the anecdote, for having turned on another such counsellor, who advocated in very sweet mild words the same measure, and taken him up "so brutally," to use his own expression, "that all his life after he never durst speak to him on the subject*."

But we need not remain longer pointing out the importance of the lessons which teach men charity, in respect to the cultivation of union and social toleration. It remains only to observe more closely, whether these lessons, as well as those which taught forgiveness, can really be had best in the Children's Bower.

"Charity," says St. Augustin, "is the lofty way. It is, indeed, an admirable way, and it comprises a great miracle; for there is nothing higher than charity; and, on the other hand, it is only the humble," (he would have allowed us to say also, the little, or those that become like the little,) "who walk in this way†." No doubt it often seems to men of mature wisdom and of isolated habits a very difficult thing to reconcile so many duties, which appear conflicting, as are implied in the word charity; they find it hard to reconcile zeal with toleration, earnestness with moderation, which they confound with indifference, lively faith with love for those who do not possess it. We should never end if we had to enumerate all the difficulties, or rather fancied impossibilities, which grown-up men have to encounter on this way. Nevertheless, the little people contrive, as if with a hop, step, and a jump, to get over them all. Children and youth, like most of womankind, have the secret of the saints—the art of amalgamating and combining duties that are in appearance opposed to each other. They can unite fervour and caution, complaisance and sincerity, zeal and moderation, mirth and wisdom, carelessness and earnestness, faith that can remove mountains, and a practical universal cordial toleration. That there is nothing unfair

* xi. 269. † In Ps. cxli.

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or exaggerated in such statements seems taken for granted, while I am making them in the words with which an orator concluded his eulogium of the celebrated Baron de Cauchy, uttered over his grave. "His faith," said M. Combes, "was absolute, active, ardent; it did not admit, as his conduct well proved, of what are called the capitulations of conscience; but it was wholly exempt from bitterness and intolerance. It was what God loves, the simple faith of a child."

No doubt, with respect to the young, one reason of the difference in their favour lies in this fact, that every thing with them is purely what it appears to be, and nothing else. They confide in God and in truth; they cannot comprehend, as Saint-Simon says of certain bishops in his time, "that an affair of doctrine and of religion should ever become one of artifices, of contrivances, of snares, and of policy. Not one of them is fashioned to any thing of that kind*." When do they ever, with envy rankling, hear a rival praised? Their zeal has nothing of self-interest in it; their cheerfulness is not studied, their carelessness not assumed, and their faith not a cloak put on to conceal either personal pride or vicious courses.

"Natura propensi sumus," says Cicero, "ad diligendos homines†." Be that as it may, children from different causes, being rooted and grounded in charity, seem to understand practically, better than many bearded philosophers, what is the width and length, and height and depth of the Christian spirit. They have, it must be repeated, a way of their own, which men would do well to learn, of combining and practising at one and the same time things that grown-up people deem irreconcilable. With all the faith of confessors, with all the constancy of martyrs, with all the delicacy of saints, they will love whoever comes up to them in a friendly way, and ask no questions. Victor of Utica, indeed, relates a story of some boys playing, who thought that their football was infected, because the mule that carried a certain heretic had touched it with his foot‡. Perhaps the occasion was not an ordinary one, and if so, we have nothing to do with the example. But certainly, be that

* Tom. xiv. 261. † De Legibus i.

‡ Lib. 2, de Persecutione Vandalic.

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as it may, while not yielding to the most fervent in regard to purity and constancy of faith, children and youth in the western Church have, in general, a very different way of testifying it, from that implied in this oriental anecdote. A zeal for conversion unquestionably belongs to them. But it shows itself in a very different way from that adopted often by their austere elders. Their poor little hearts are full of the importance of gaining over to truth those who are estranged from it. As Plato, like the Psalmist, would say, "They are for destroying some in such a manner as to make them, from being wicked and senseless, good and wise. They are for destroying thus the boy and the girl, and the grown-up man, and every one, young or old, who in this way needs destruction*;" but they go to work in a manner very characteristic. They do not prepare to burn him or to flay him, to disparage or misrepresent him; they only steal away from playmates to say the rosary for him; they stop longer on their knees at their night prayers to implore blessings on his head. No one hears from them the secret, though it oozes out unintentionally. But it would be a fine study for a painter, if you were to propose to any of these little meditative heads a conversion of men by any other way of destruction,—by means of cruelty and persecution, by massacres or gend'armes, or even, my good reverend stranger in a Geneva gown, by threats of starvation, and by publishing calumnies against them, so as to render them odious to the population amidst which they live. The looks of the juveniles, at all events, would convince you that their notions of the proper method of proceeding in such matters differed very widely from those of many statesmen, and in private life of many intelligent men, who are supposed to be the best judges. Grown-up people and men of literature might learn from the spirit of youth to agree with Charron, saying, "De mesdire, de mordre, et charpenter le nom d'austruy, il est trop pédant†." Mark that felicitously chosen word, my learned Theban, "too pedantic." Many might think it a high compliment to ascribe to you a talented malignity; but few will envy you the unction that you can extract for your soul from being set down for what the French,

* Euthydemus. † De la Sagesse.

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seeming to talk like boys, call so happily a "cuistre." Intolerance, at present, may not, indeed, be avowed in the world, any more than in the bower;

> "But oh, remember the indignant press!
> Honey is bitter to its fond caress.
> While the black venom that its hate lets fall,
> Would shame to sweetness the hyena's gall!"

Men might learn from the ways of youth to avoid that spirit of the Greeks, of which Tacitus says, "Dictis dicta ultus est," and to act on all occasions a more natural, gracious, and becoming part; for truly, as Plato says, "it is a great inconsistency for one who pretends to be a lover of virtue to persevere in doing nothing else but act unfairly in argument *."

> "Nature is liberal to her inmost soul,
> She loves alike the tropic and the pole,
> The storm's wild anthem, and the sunshine's calm,
> The arctic fungus, and the desert palm;
> Loves them alike, and wills that each maintain
> Its destined share of her divided reign;
> No creeping moss refuse her crystal gem;
> No soaring pine her cloudy diadem!
> Alas! her children, borrowing but in part
> The flowing pulses of her generous heart,
> Shame their kind mother with eternal strife
> At all the crossings of their mingled life;
> Each age, each people, finds its ready shifts
> To quarrel stoutly o'er her choicest gifts †."

From children's ministry men might learn to be as loving as they are fervent; as full of good breeding and fairness as of learning; as mindful of humanity as they are raised above nature by grace. A thoughtful lad might, without any stretch of imagination, be expected to address a friend who was an alien from faith in such words as these of St. Augustin, that express what would be naturally uppermost in his mind on such an occasion: "Why do you seek darkness? Answer not, Since I am gone astray, why seek me? It is because you are

* Théætet. † Holmes.

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gone astray that I seek you. You say, Don't trouble yourself about me. Leave me alone. Seek me not. It is schism which makes you speak so; but the charity which unites us to you, and which makes us brethren, cannot permit it. No one will accuse me of severity if I seek my servant gone astray, and you will blame me if I seek a brother? Let those who have no charity in their hearts for their brethren keep such thoughts; but for me, I will not cease to search for my brother. Let him be angry if he will; he will be appeased as soon as he is found. I will seek my brother, and invoke Jesus Christ, my Master, not against, but for him; and I will not say, in praying to Him, Lord, say to my brother that he divide the heritage with me, but I will say to my brother that he enjoy with me the whole inheritance *." The children here before us have often spoken thus unpremeditatedly, and tried as far as they could to set an example to persons dear to them, in order to win them from the cold ways of unbelief. They have succeeded, too, at times; and persons most confirmed and resolved in opposition have been moved by their artless fervour to become what they now bless God for being; but all the while there was nothing seen in their young monitors but natural, unaffected sweetness, and the smiles of common humanized affection. Instinctively, indeed, youth seems to approve of that primitive practice alluded to by St. Augustin, where he says, "We eat much more willingly with pagans and strangers than with those of our faith who are bad men †;" who, by the way, we may add, seldom come near them, and of whom, consequently, they know nothing. No one ever possessed a stronger faith than the eldest of these boys. But where was he not welcomed as answering the character in which he presented himself, as being the sincere friend and the dear companion? who so prejudiced by the spirit of dissent as not to have for him a right hand stretched out? who ever heard him speak, or beheld him act towards any one in such a manner as to indicate that he did not instinctively follow St. Augustin's rule, to view every man in the light of a present, or at least of a future brother? And then, along with his younger little allies, how kind, how cordial

* In Ps. xviii. † In Ps. c.

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was the welcome that he gave to the paternal guest who came from separated camps! what clapping of hands on his arrival! what pensive looks and throwing of kisses on his departure, to be followed, for many a night and morning afterwards, with secret prayer for his happiness, both in time and in eternity! What more need be added? Here were shown in combined simultaneous action the two virtues, faith and toleration.

Such is the lesson that can be obtained on this subject in the company of the young. It agrees with what the holy have always taught. "Si habes brachium sicut Deus, et si voce simili sonas, disperge superbos in furore tuo, et respiciens omnem arrogantem humilia;" "which words of the book of Job," says Gerson, "proclaim openly that this work is reserved for God alone. You seek," he continues, "to exercise zeal against sinners; you seek to destroy them from the earth. I will give you an antidote, without the sound of words, without a rod, without a prison, without stripes or wounds, without peril to yourself: 'Bene vive tibi, et pro aliis orans, ipsos tolera et geme: nihil aliud tibi concessum est*.'"

It remains, in this chapter, to consider what the young can teach with respect to the last branch of charity, which consists in sympathy with the sorrows of men, and in efforts to relieve their necessities, whether arising from mental afflictions, from bodily pain, or from poverty.

It falls not to our province here to speak of the fountains of mercy opened for the wants, sorrows, and misfortunes of mankind, in the mysterious spiritual society of the faithful, established by our Redeemer upon earth; but there is one spot in which these fountains well over, as far as wishes can unlock them, with unceasing profusion, which it is our special object to observe. Need I name it?—the Children's Bower. The works of mercy, corporal and spiritual, are expressed in the two lines:

> "Colligo, poto, cibo, tego, sano, visito, condo.
> Corrige, duc, cela, doceas, solare, fer, ora."

These are hard words for the children; but there is not one of

* De Consolatione Theologiæ, P. iv. lib. iii.

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these fourteen duties included in them, to the discharge of which the young are not attracted by a certain natural affection accepting and co-operating with the inspiration of a higher love. In a year of scarcity, 1563, the guardian of the convent of Mount Alverna found it necessary to order that no one but the porter should give alms at the gate*. Singular command, we might think, if we did not know what was the charity of such communities, or if we had never lived under the same roof with children. But how often is it necessary for young people to be rather restrained than excited when it is a question of generosity and profuse relief? At all events it is never their fault if the words of the prophet, speaking of Jerusalem, cannot be applied to their bower: "Conculcat pes, pedes pauperum, gressus egenorum." Oh, how often are heard addressed to its little denizens such words as these in Wallenstein,—

"You have beheld me in my agony,
And shown a feeling heart!"

Poor, crushed, broken-down creatures, in fact, will often try to steal hither from the hall, led to it instinctively in their sorrow, and saying,

"—— but I will ease my breast
Of secret grief here in this bowery nest."

We shall see later how true and practical are the consolations that are found in it. For in the bower men might learn the lesson which will come later, if they neglect it, when "the heavy folded curtain falls upon their own stage of life;" that "the justice they loved was intended to have been done in fact, and not in poetry, and the felicity they sympathized in, to have been bestowed, and not feigned †." Of what avail to feed their benevolence with fallacies of felicity, and to satisfy their righteousness with poetry of justice? To mourners of what use are these elegant cards or letters of condolence, which are often the sum and substance of all the comfort you can have from wise, mature, grown-up people in the higher walks of life? If you are unhappy, depend upon it, it is not you that they will visit.

* Vital. Chronica Montis Alvernæ, 207. † Ruskin.

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To write once to you, perhaps, they may think proper and decorous on such occasions; but when they receive an answer from you full of anguish, there the matter rests as far as they are concerned. But with children you can talk of your sorrow for months together, and utter your lamentations day after day; and their delicacy of feeling will not make them think it proper to avoid your company, as if the pestilence were in your house.

However, as it is the poor after all who are the continued sufferers, let us confine our observation to what awaits them from the spirit of the bower.

I suppose we need no prelude here to show the importance of its lessons respecting what we owe to the indigent. "Call the just," says the Psalmist. "That is to say," adds St. Augustin, "call those who, living by faith, were charitable to the poor; for these are the works that are by heaven called good. 'Do not perform your good works before men,' says Christ; 'but when you give alms,'—thereby marking that good works mean alms. 'Call the just,'—call those who had compassion on the poor*." Call the children, then, if you would see the simplicity of this action, the beauty of this action, the earnestness of this action, the consequence of this action. Children cannot do much, perhaps, in the way of positive assistance; but their good wishes are never wanting. They cannot redeem captives like religious orders, receive to hospitality the hungry, like noble Castelains, give marriage-portions to enable poor maidens to marry, like a Palæotus, and other cardinal-archbishops of Bologna, who, instead of taking from the daughters of the rich, gave to those of the poor dowries for five girls at least every year of the city †. But they love every one, and they show kindness in a natural way, with sweet simplicity; and if maturity and age would copy their spirit, they would evince that rare merit which Saint-Simon ascribes to the wife of the Chancellor Pontchartrain, "in whom," he says, "virtue and piety had all through life kept increasing with her fortune ‡." The young know little about abstractions or

* In Ps. xlix. † De Bonon. Eccl. Admin. 409.
‡ T. xi. 72.

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universals; all they know of humanity is confined to its existence in some one or other individual man, woman, boy, or girl, and if there was no one or other such person, they would care as little about the generalization as if they had learned by heart the maxim of the schoolmen: "Destructis primis substantiis impossibile est, aliquid aliorum remanere *." But to see the beauty of the action, we must behold examples of it. "Ferdinand Egret," says the author of the book entitled Souvenirs de St. Acheul, "had a marked affection for the poor. He used to give them alms from his little purse, and he used to plead for them with his parents when he had nothing in it. Marius Olive also was full of compassion for the poor, and he used to beg his parents to enable him to assist them. He used to give till his purse was empty. He seemed to divide his immense respect between them and priests, whose hands and habits he used to kiss. Such he was in the age of innocence, of frankness, candour, docility, and other virtues, that are the preludes to a holy life." But shut your books, and only look again at our little John, and at his eldest brother, and at the others whom I must not designate. When did they slight the wretched? when despise the modest, humble suit of poverty? See the little shops kept and arranged for the sale of self-made things, or of articles purchased with savings, to raise money to be sent to the fund for the redemption of poor Chinese infants. And apropos of the said shop, let me relate a trait of ingeniously conceived, though uncalled-for charity, that of course, to use critical language, "ought not to be published." Little John ran a foot-race, the brother next in age keeping close at his side, saying, "Don't give in, Jack! don't give in!" Of course he wouldn't; and he won it. But what did he win besides glory?—a gold pin which had been picked up by his brother, who after some weeks' inquiries could find no claimant for it. Well, when he died, this brother gave the pin to the said shop, saying that some one would be sure to offer a large price for it in consideration of its history, and that little Jack would have the merit of the alms. But mark this eldest brother, to whom the mere sons of nature would say in witnessing his generosity,

* Gerson, De Simplif. Cordis.

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trying like old Homer to account for it in a way of their own, *αἴματος εἰς ἀγαθοῖο*. God had given him a great heart,—a spacious heart, where love and all his train might lodge. "Oh, what a gift is that!" exclaims Antonio de Guevara; "a nobleman cannot secure a greater!" You might have thought that it was of him M. de Vatimesnil spoke, when describing M. Hyde de Neuville, he said, "one day he met a poor woman loaded with green wood, and said to her, You expose yourself to a prosecution, and she replied, I am not afraid of it; it is from you I have taken it all." Had he been spared, his birth would have proved a joy to many, and realized the hopes expressed by those fires which blazed upon some hills when he first came into the world. One day he returned home, running into the house breathless. "Please let me have a sovereign." "What for?" He would not wait to explain. He ran to some one else: "I want a sovereign." It was given to him. He vanished; but in a few minutes, from the other side of the house, he was seen to accost a young man, and put something into his hand. The next day he was asked who was the unknown. "Oh! it was only a poor young fellow, a very honest fellow, I am sure, that was hard up! I could not refuse him. Besides, he only wanted to borrow it. And what even if he should never repay me?" In fact at all times, like the youth in Homer, who was asked angrily if he had given what he gave to the stranger willingly or by constraint, Tom would instinctively have answered, word for word,

Αὐτὸς ἐκὼν οἱ δῶκα· τί κεν ῥέξειε καὶ ἄλλος,
Ὁππότ' ἀνὴρ τοιοῦτος, ἔχων μελεδήματα θυμῷ,
Αἰτίζῃ; χαλεπόν κεν ἀνήνασθαι δόσιν εἶῃ.

Just so; if you will hear him, he never did any thing good, but what every one else in his place would have done. He might truly add it was difficult, in fact, it seemed impossible for him to refuse. As Overbury would say, he was a poor arithmetician for multiplication and addition; but he could endure subtraction well enough. When riding at a short distance from home without money in his pocket, he would say to a man in distress what Nausicaa said to Ulysses: "Go to our house. No one applies there without having his wants supplied." Being

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once alone at Ramsgate, he saw one day a needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch, seeming half distracted with some new misfortune, and he asked him the cause of such extraordinary grief. "As if I should tell you!" replied the lean-faced stranger, appearing to be stung with some unutterable disdain and anger. The other withdrew, but watched him, and again, after a short time, accosted him. "How foolish is it," he said, "my friend, not to tell me! Ease your mind; let me know what afflicts you." Then the poor creature, perhaps unaccustomed to such a tone of voice, told him that they were about to sell his very bed for rent, and drive out his wife and children. Tom pulled out half a sovereign. "What!" exclaimed the other, "you don't mean, young man, that I'm to keep all this?" "Yes, but I do; so say no more about it, and go home." The "young man," as the poor one called him, never mentioned this circumstance; but after his death, a woman who had seen and heard what passed, related it. And mark too, that this was at a time when he used often to be reproved for not giving an account of what he did with his allowance, though he had but little besides the "pour" each time that he went any where, understanding by the term, however, something better than the word in chalk letters on the door of a lodging, for which ambassadors used formerly to contend*. Not a farthing was found in his purse when he died. The day of his death, almost in the agony, he asked the father who assisted him to give him a penny. It was given to him. He returned it back with his trembling hand, as much as to say, for the poor. The penny is kept. There is a thought in it. I wish those who hold it may profit by such a memento, as they ought. It is no wonder that the praise of this youth was on many tongues; and literally one might say, πολλοὶ δέ μιν ἐσθλὸν ἔειπον.

And now, my very wise and learned critic, do you maintain that such examples are too familiar, and that they are not worth mention? I dare say that some will be of that opinion; but they must allow me to think that it is such touches, given as it were on the spot, that make a picture living, and that they form an apt conclusion to this chapter, which shows the lessons of

* St.-Sim. Mém. ii. 186.

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charity that are furnished by the young. O golden age of youth! age of charity! age therefore of perfection! may thy spirit be retained by all of us! Visible was it in this last instance, how, as an old author says, "thou enviedst no man's comforts, insultedst no man's opinions, blackenedst no man's character, devouredst no man's bread! Gently didst thou ramble round the little circle of thy pleasures, jostling no creature in thy way; for each man's need thou hadst thy shilling,—for each one's woe a tear."

CHAPTER X.

ELL, we have found a bower worthy of the name! What a delicious little garden once you are in it! Who could have thought it so pretty, passing outside the hedge along that dusty road! What green walks! With what an artistic eye to effect have the benches been placed! What parterres of flowers! What a concert of birds! Come now, scorner of Cockayne, never mind that pewter pot on the seat. What harm does it do you? I suppose you would fret if you saw the way some grounds are ornamented, and scorn Milton for commending the

> "——————— retired leisure,
> That in trim gardens takes his pleasure."

By the way, let me solemnly exhort you not to affect manhood so abominably by pretending to scorn pretty spots like this. "We have a liking for such things," says Leigh Hunt, speaking of a certain sham castle in a garden. "We must own we cannot wish the tower down, now that it is up. It reminds us, if not of impregnable forts and enchanted castles, yet of the love of such things in imagination, of the books that speak of them, and of the intense delight we should have felt in being able to realize such an edifice for ourselves in childhood *." Does not even the severe and inflexible Ruskin say, "There is in garden de-

* The Old Court Suburb.

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coration some fitting admission of deceptive trickeries, as of pictured landscapes at the extremities of alleys and arcades,—which things have sometimes a certain luxury and pleasurableness in places meant for idleness, and are innocent enough as long as they are regarded as mere toys*?" However, if you will look beyond the garden, here is the real horizon, such as it is, to content you, and it is only these poor tables and seats in the middle of the grass that recall suburban paradise. But, hurrah! there is another feature of resemblance that even you will highly approve of; for look! in the shady spot behind us there is actually a swing; so I suppose I must lay down my Virgil; but see first what I have just found in him:

> "Stant et juniperi et castaneæ hirsutæ:
> Strata jacent passim sua quæque sub arbore póma;
> Omnia rident."

Well, after half an hour's swinging, and laughing, and bobbing around, we all sit down to continue our discussions, dissertations, essays, or what you like.

We must not delay longer without looking at the root from which so many beauteous blossoms grow. You know children are impatient, and will often disregard all consequences to satisfy their curiosity in examining into the principles of things. Let us imitate them in this respect, and pull up our little tree to see what has been hitherto covered up and hidden. Let us observe the lessons respecting faith, which can be learned in their bower. "The pagans," says St. Augustin, "can see the good works of Christians, but our sacraments are concealed from them. It is however what they do not see that produces what they do see†."

The first lesson in this respect which is obtained in the Children's Bower, is that which teaches the infinite importance of possessing what elsewhere is often hardly remembered even by name,—divine faith.

Natural religion, we must admit, or rather should love to remind one another, is a fact in the world not to be ignored in relation to children any more than to theologians. "Faith," says Gerson, "though supernatural, does not refute natural and

* The Seven Lamps of Architecture. † In Ps. ciii.

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congruent reasons." "All physical science," observes a philosopher, "is in religious sentiments, and all religion in monuments of nature." Natural theology even, as another great modern writer says, rests on the same foundation upon which all the other sciences, as well as the practical conduct of all human affairs must for ever repose. "It is," as he continues to observe, "with natural religion as with many of the greatest blessings of our sublunary lot; they are so common, so habitually present and enjoyed by us, that we become insensible of their value, and only estimate them aright when we lose them or fancy them lost. Accustomed to handle the truths of Revelation in connexion with, and in addition to, those of natural theology, and never having experienced any state of mind in which we were without the latter, we forget how essential they are to the former. As we are wont to forget the existence of the air we constantly breathe, until put in mind of it by some violent change threatening suffocation, so it requires a violent fit of abstraction to figure to ourselves the state of our belief in Revelation, were the lights of natural religion withdrawn. But the existence and attributes of God are so familiarly proved by every thing around us, that we can hardly picture to ourselves the state of our belief in this great truth, if we only knew it by the testimony borne to miracles*." All this, no doubt, is true, though it will displease those timid, short-sighted contemporaries of ours, who of course know a great deal more of theology than Molina, Lessius, Vasquez, and Suarez, who never denied the natural order, or thought that humanity, with its gifts, its virtues, its merits, its vocation, and its whole order apart, did not continue under the supernatural order and Christianity; but still there remains the one great fact of all supreme importance, —the need and efficacy of divine faith, which is as much a gift as genius. There are in the very first elements of form two classes of curves, as a great author styles them, "the mortal and the immortal curves; the one having an appointed term of existence, the other absolutely incomprehensible and endless, only to be seen or grasped during a certain moment of their course. And it is found universally, that the class to which the human mind

* Lord Brougham, Nat. Theol. 134.

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is attached for its chief enjoyment, are the endless or immortal lines." I don't want to forestall predictions, or to set up already for a prophet of domestic woes to any bower. But profound sorrow, in some shape or other, will come sooner or later to every one; and then, for your consolation, do not count on the mortal curves; "do not," as a French author says, "depend on nature, or on reason, or on men. Unless very singularly constituted, religion, positive religion, religion organized, involving divine faith, alone will be able to shed upon your wounds a healing and lasting balm; alone it will remain faithful to you when every thing else, strength, mental energy, speech itself, will have abandoned you; alone it will sweeten your tears; alone it will, with its material hand, make your strange bed; alone, in fine, it will sustain your soul. But if religion be to you a stranger; if you don't understand its language; if you do not know its heart of a mother; what can you expect from it*?" The remark of a great author, that all the pleasure of the mediæval landscape was in stability, definiteness, and luminousness, while the moderns are expected in their landscapes to rejoice in darkness, and to triumph in mutability, may be extended to the whole mind of those who have faith, and of those who want it, while laying the foundation of happiness in things which momentarily change or fade, and expecting the utmost instruction from what it is impossible to arrest or to comprehend.

However, it is not for us to pretend to show the total insufficiency of natural theology as a guide to any portion of the human family, and the immeasurable distance which separates a mere intellectual conviction arising out of it from the prolific principle of divine faith. A celebrated historian, Augustus Thierry, has indicated it, saying to the Père Gratry, "I see by history the manifest necessity for a divine and visible authority to develop the life of the human race. All that is without Christianity counts for nothing; and all that is without the Church wants authority; therefore the Church is the authority which I seek, and to which I submit myself†." But we may ask leave with all the world to observe, that the root of what chiefly pre-

* Gaume. † Le Correspondant, tom. v. 404.

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sents itself for admiration in children, has in the latter its origin and its life. We have already had pointed out the possibility of contrasts in children themselves. The character which Aristotle ascribes to youth as natural, falls infinitely short of what we are in habits of witnessing every day in this decried world of ours. He describes it as involved in mutability, proneness to anger, ambition of honour and victory, rashness and ignorance; and Plato says, "that a boy is, of all wild beasts, the most difficult to manage; that he becomes crafty, and keen, and the most insolent of wild beasts, and that it is necessary to bind him, as it were, with many chains *." Can we wonder, after this, to hear a Christian author, Baldesanus, using these words: "Certum est igitur viam naturæ ducere adolescentem non modo ad nullam felicitatem, sed etiam ad perniciem certissimam †?" "The way of moral virtues," he adds, "without the supernatural light of faith, would never lead children to their end; for 'sine fide impossibile est placere Deo.' The only way for them, as for others, is that which our Redeemer opens, saying, 'Ego sum via,—Ego sum ostium.'" All this will displease some philosophers; but really by retracing, with Picus of Mirandula, what the human mind had been able to produce in times of the Gentiles, who had quite as clear heads as any one now can boast of, by observing how the noblest intelligences were divided on all subjects, and with what vanity the profoundest men contended, we must perceive how impossible it is to arrive at truth without the light which shines upon children from the Gospel, and with what justice we are called upon by that most learned and profound investigator to be grateful for so inestimable a benefit. "To have a part taken," says Villemain, "'un partis pris,' on all subjects constitutes precisely a moral education;" and this is what follows from the faith of the bower. Moreover, without faith, and the institutions growing from it, neither the innocence of children, nor even the natural chivalry of boys can be depended on. "Though they are tame, they may leap like a hand-wolf into their natural wildness, and do an outrage." In this sense, as well as in the literal one, we may interpret the words of Gerson, the chancellor of the university of Paris,

* Leg. vii. † Stimul. Virtut. Adolescentiæ Christianæ.

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addressed to the senate, when speaking of France he said, "Quand clergie y faudra, bonne chevalerie n'y durera pas grandement *." If you want the Children's Bower such as we are attempting to describe, you must have near at hand, as our fathers would say, the "moutier." The archery-ground, and the closed picturesque temple, though of the best of queens, won't suffice. Neither will even a sort of home, "Upper Hope," as Etonians call it, and the prospect of the sixth form later, suffice. Quintilian's son of ten years had docility, obedience, respect for his masters, ardour for study, dislike of vice and disorder, probity, goodness, gentleness, liberality, patience, courage, and greatness of mind in a long sickness. "What was wanting," asks Rollin, who knew what boys were if any one knew it, "to all those virtues?" That, he replies fearlessly, which ought to be their soul, the precious gift of faith and grace. And as St. Thomas, who had an eye for all things, says, "Bonum gratiæ unius majus est quam bonum naturæ totius universi †."

When a great calamity—the death of those we love—visits us, to avert which we have vainly made promises and vows, there rises sometimes in the mind a terrible evidence of the need of this divine monitor and guardian. There is a sublime, awful temptation, dictating words like those of Prometheus or the Satan of Milton. Faith drives out the temptation, tramples on it; but the sense of having felt it for a moment, and of having heard its detestable whisper, is appalling. It shows that we have in us something dangerous which wisdom may well fear. It shows, however, also, what is the dignity and freedom of the human mind, and the necessity of saving it from rebellion against omnipotence, by grace, by humility, by submission, by the memory of Christ's passion.

The fact is, the beautiful human nature, as any of us can see, has got somehow or another out of order, and the effects of this internal derangement can be traced in all ages. Think of the impiety of young lads, sons of infidel parents in France, some thirty years ago, when they used to torment, and actually, in cold blood, wound a fellow-student like Maillefer, at St. Acheul,

* Querela Nomine Universitatis ad Sen. Parisiensem.

† I. 2. 9. 114, art. 9.

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merely through hatred of his piety to God*. If we wanted proof of what the best young natures grow to when perverted, we need only look to those who in the modern society have been known to play the part performed by the Janissaries in former times. Who were the Janissaries? They were the children of Christians, forcibly taken from their parents in annual drafts, and brought up in the schools of the government, with an exclusive admiration for its spirit, its system, its discipline, and its hatreds. We all know what these young men were when confronted with those from whom they sprung.

I am not, therefore, such a panegyrist of the bower in general, as to pretend that all such circles of young people are alike, and that we cannot derive from observing them any lessons founded on contrasts between good and evil. So far otherwise, I believe that when viewed in all its varieties, it affords abundant proof of the just grounds which Bonifacius had for wonder at the blindness of those who disregard such lessons. "I have often lamented this," he says, alluding to but one effect of discarding them, "in the houses of the rich and great people, that they seem to attend only to form the external manners of children, while neglectful of religion and piety; but we, who think that all must begin from this foundation, show clearly that a boy, whether of noble or of ignoble birth, ought to seek to please God first, and then men. These rich men breed up their children so that these are only pleased with the company of nobles, and for this end they train them exclusively to attend to outward behaviour; though I think that nothing is more amiable in a young person, than to see him scorning the silly pomp of the world, and embracing common popular things without any necessity being imposed on him to attend to them †."

But some will object that, after all efforts, the results are never sure. Well, even granting this, still, as the Père de Neuville says, "If the most Christian education leaves cause for apprehension as to the end, does an education neglected as to faith, leave any thing to hope for?"

But, in general, the facts are so salient and multiplied that

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul. † Institutio Christiani Pueri.

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it is a mere work of supererogation, as the schoolmen used to say, to think of refuting objections of this kind. Every thing that happens daily around us attests the truth of the old Christian philosophy with respect to the young. The process of their illumination admitting not for a single day of that suspension of judgment, which it was the object of the ancient sceptics to obtain, is thus clearly and beautifully described by Bishop Gillis, in his lecture on education: "The first school-bench on which divine wisdom intended a child to sit, is its mother's knee; with the mysterious promptings of maternal love for its first and unwritten lesson-book. But as the wayward nature of that infant child too soon reminds those around him of the fact of his fallen estate, and, as even parental authority is powerless, if viewed apart from Him 'of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named*,' the day soon comes when it is felt necessary to teach that child the existence of a higher authority than even that of its earthly father, and to name to him his Maker. It is then that, in the same incomprehensible and miraculous manner, through which an infant is enabled to discover language, and to conquer for itself its wide domain, an inward thrill seems to respond at once to the mysterious sound now uttered. That revelation has been made, which is oft 'hidden from the wise and prudent'—and the little stranger has, as it were, scanned the universe at a glance, and discovered God! 'O Lord, our Lord!' exclaims the Psalmist, 'how admirable is thy name throughout the whole earth; for out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected thy praise†!' From this epoch in infant life, all subsequent education must date its groundwork; for it is now that for the first time that power has been acknowledged within the infant's mind, through which the Church of God will afterwards proceed to check its vices, to regulate its dispositions, to develop its faculties, and to begin within the soul the work of virtue‡."

Though we are not engaged with the history of the Children's Bower, there is a lesson indirectly resulting from a glance at it, which it might be well to notice, as signifying who were its

* Eph. iii. 16. † Ps. viii. 3.

‡ P. 21.

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best friends; for the parish catechisms, from which such great results are found to flow, may be said to have been founded by St. Pius V., St. Charles Borromeo, and the learned Bellarmin, who was so especially beloved by the poor children. These great men taught in person. St. Francis de Sales is described as surrounded by an army of children, he being seated in the midst. St. Ignatius, also, taught children in the parish churches of Rome. The blessed Cæsar de Bus was called the apostle of children; in fine, the venerable Olier founded the catechism of St. Sulpice. It appears, from the work of Cardinal Palæotus, on the administration of the diocese of Bologna, that in that great city there was not a single boy or girl to whom the provident care of its archbishop had not provided instruction in the essential doctrines of the Christian religion *.

But with the history of the Children's Bower, whether deriving its instruction as to matters of faith on mothers' knees, under the paternal roof, in schools, or in public institutions, we are not here concerned. Only let us note one great characteristic of the faith of the bower, namely, its simplicity, humility, or, if you will, its adaptation to the mould in which it was intended by God that it should be fashioned and shaped, which consists in a certain definite form involving obscurity as to its details. It is not, therefore, passionate, as if inspired by some new dogma of theology; nor wavering and spasmodic as if alternating by a consideration of a new dogma, between admiration and misgivings; nor distinct and complete, as if forgetting the fact that we cannot see the millionth part of any thing even in the material world; which led Socrates to say that "wonder is the affection of a philosopher, that there is no other beginning of philosophy than this, and that he who held Iris to be the daughter of Thaumas, did not describe her genealogy badly †." It verifies his remark, that "the dim-sighted perceive many things sooner than those who see more clearly ‡." It leaves on every elevated summit the little cloud, that a profound observer § of our time points at, as resting on the mountain top. Beyond the general form, it is content

* De Bonon. Eccl. Admin. p. 11.
† Théætet.
‡ De Repub.
§ Ruskin.

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to see nothing distinctly. It can see just enough to know what it has to believe, but it sees nothing with such clearness as to feel assured how much it knows. When asked for more precision, its only answer is yet again, "Behold the cloud!" And we may confidently add, that the wiser men become, the less inclined will they be to seek to see more than the children, and the more reverent will be their acknowledgment of the presence of the cloud.

Let us proceed, then, in conformity with our purpose, to speak more in detail of the lessons yielded by the faith of the bower to manhood and to age, and of the benefit which the grown-up world may derive from attending to them.

That faith, which however we profane people may talk at times, we know and feel to be the greatest of all divine blessings vouchsafed to man, without which every thing falls to ruin within him and about him, is often endangered, weakened, or even eventually lost altogether in the progress of his life on earth, is a fact familiar to every one, and verified by daily experience.

> "Oh! what a thing is man,
> To bandy factions of distemper'd passions
> Against the sacred Providence above him!"

Allowance must be made for ignorance in youth, and habits of mind growing out of it, while stretching waywardly towards what is divine; but often as men advance in life, they are liable to become sceptical, not, Heaven knows it is needless to remark, through a fuller development and exercise of the intelligence, or a more generous obedience to the suggestions and affections of a pure heart, but through a contraction of the intellectual and moral powers in consequence of the voluntary and repeated rejection, in greater or lesser things, of the light of conscience. The disputations of the sceptics with the facts they collect, however curious and ingenious, are powerless in regard to the Christian discipline, as Picus of Mirandula remarks; for that depends not on the sight or on the taste, but on the hearing, which Aristotle even calls the sense of discipline; for faith, says the Apostle, is "ex auditu,"—and that, by hearing the Word, which can neither deceive nor be deceived. But

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when men, for reasons of their own, resolve to turn a deaf ear to this divine teaching and reject discipline, they are in doubt, uncertainty, and suspense — the latter, which regards their volition being insurmountable, whatever knowledge they might acquire, to dispel the former, or justify resolution. It is not, as Plato indeed shows, that they are impelled in this direction solely by a want of mastery over pleasures and desires. They are borne along by a certain false opinion, which they cling to as to a system of philosophy *, and they are unwilling, as St. Augustin says, for the sake of what they call an uncertain truth, to cast off the load of their delusions, which are often felt to be flattering to their latent pride. They are therefore stopped, as Plato would say, by falsehood, ψεῦδος, which is the contrary of that rushing on which gave rise to the name for truth, ἀλήθεια, as being θεία ἄλη, a divine activity. They are detained, and so compelled to be at rest, that the very name ψεῦδος is assimilated to those who sleep †. Then they expose themselves purposely to the lulling influence of all who insidiously, or avowedly, are opposed to faith; and against this action it would be as difficult to find a specific if they even desired it later, as it would be to discover a preventative remedy for the body against poison; for the story that Mithridates had fortified his system against poison, by the constant use of antidotes, is a romance which modern science has pronounced impossible. A bad life and a good belief, as an old writer says, are "disagreeable and troublesome neighbours; and where they separate, depend upon it 'tis for no other cause but quietness' sake." Then, the society of those whose influence is favourable to the growth or recovery of faith is fled from. No more visits to the bower then, or to the "moutier" either. The physician has more power over them than the confessor. They are truth, as Valentine says of himself, and come to give the world the lie. They don't care much for an audience "in qua sunt mulierculæ et pueri." "Only children, only fit for children:" how irresistible seems to many the force of such expressions! But analyze them, and what does it all mean? It means simply this. You need not interrogate those who are

* Leges x. † Cratylus.

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last come from God, and, as far as personal merit is concerned, the freshest from their Maker's hand. For their opinions to be at all worth knowing, you must wait till a hidden disarrangement of their inward works begins to tell; till their hearts are, besides, corrupted, and their minds contracted by long and assiduous converse with what Christianity, like Plato, calls the world. This is no unfair statement, for either they must continue children in mind and so merit your disdain, or they must experience this result, there being no other possible alternative. In point of fact, who does not know that many grown-up persons, without openly proclaiming their choice, are what they ought to be, just as blighted corn is corn? Outside all seems right; but touch them, and you have only dust. Very clever, very intellectual, very spiritual perhaps are they, as far as despising all the grossness of flesh and blood:

> "Still calculating, calculating still,
> But yet at last their calculation proves
> Erroneous; the whole game is lost; and, lo!
> Their own souls will be found among the forfeits."

Sometimes the scepticism is only vague and hidden. Then, as Emerson says, "if one of these persons in a high official dignity meets an intelligent gentleman, and reads fatal interrogations in his eyes, he has no resource but to take wine with him, the system he defends having nothing left but possession." At other times unbelief assumes a bolder tone, and forms the candidate for admission into the "club of moral philosophers, who assemble twice a week in order to show the absurdity of the present mode of religion, and establish a new one instead." Goldsmith, on entering, found the members very warmly disputing, not indeed about religion or ethics, but about who had neglected to lay down his preliminary sixpence upon entering the room. However, let the inference pass; we don't want it now. This mature manhood and singularly eminent intelligence that can judge fitly of those mysteries which heaven will not have earth to know, declare war against all received opinions and established rules, and level their batteries particularly against those universal principles which had stood unshaken in all the vicissitudes of literature, and are considered as the inviolable

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temples of truth. Within their precincts men seek to be initiated in the great mysteries, as Socrates would say pleasantly, "before they are in the small, which he did not think was allowed *." With regard to the former, the "argumenta delirii" are pronounced unanswerable, while all the intuitions and affinities of children are either ignored or counted as nothing. And yet how evidently truthful and divine are these intuitions, affinities, or whatever else you please to call them! We cannot do better than pause a moment to consider this a little.

The positive is of the bower, the vague is of the academy. So manhood in its proud maturity, for the secret reasons already glanced at, flies to what it terms nature, which is vague, and seeks rest there. But facts to demonstration prove that nature, like man, is fallen, and has no uninterrupted perfections to fix human love. "There is," as a great writer says, "cruelty and implacability in nature; there is even ugliness: nature has betrayed the heart that loved her." There is evil in nature, and there are visible palpable defects and negations full of falsehood in nature. It is not on the present scheme of things as a whole that the eye can for ever quietly and lovingly rest; it is only in the future, in the wished-for end, that the human heart can hope for contentment. Nature assumes her greatest loveliness only when we recognize her misfortune, and see her through the glass of faith, or, as it were, with Calvary in the background. Besides, nature is the thing created; and with youth the adoration of the Creator rarely or never sinks into that of the works of his hands. It is only the grown-up world that is liable to this fatal and portentous degeneracy. "Until the idea of a personal God is comprehended, through what a tangled maze of dangerous enchantment," exclaims a modern author, "does the spirit tread! That dream of nature is the opium dream of life, and if it bring the rapture it will by and by bring the agony and delirium of opium." Alas! thou, beautiful nature, thou hast thy terrors, thy portents; thou hast death and agony, monsters, and idiots, and scoundrels; and children can see and point out all this to you. "This is the test you may apply to all pantheistic ideas," continues Hood, adopting unconsciously the

* Gorgias.

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touchstone of the young; "they are not susceptible of shape. This is the test you may apply to all the unhealthy productions of mystics,—paint their conceptions,—be sure the thing is unreal that you cannot in some way or other realize *." St. Augustin argues with the professors of the vague in the following manner: "But I don't see my soul; how should I believe in its existence? You have not eyes made to discern it. But since only your body is seen, why are you not buried? You exclaim, 'Because I am alive.' But how can I know that you are alive, since I can't see your soul? You answer, 'Because I speak, and walk, and act.' O blind madman! you want me to know you by your actions, and you do not wish to recognize the Creator by his creatures! 'But I shall be nothing when I am dead.' This is some able man who speaks so. He has studied philosophy. He has acquired this particular knowledge from Epicurus, or from some one else, a greater friend to vanity than to wisdom, whom the philosophers even designate as a hog. May such science perish! May the young plants of Jerusalem increase and multiply! may they see what they can see; but may they believe with a faithful heart what they cannot see †!" But we shall hear some one reply, The mature sense and philosophic reason that you disparage admit the belief in a Supreme Being. Yes; but what does their idea amount to even while it lasts, or what are we the better for considering only the causation of causes in the causes of things? The child's conception of God is the only one universal and efficient, frequently, too, the only one that lasts. "For the moment," says a great author, "that, in our pride of heart, we refuse to accept the condescension of the Almighty, and desire Him, instead of stooping, to hold our hands, to rise up before us into his glory,—we hoping that by standing on a grain of dust or two of human knowledge higher than our fellows, we may behold the Creator as He rises,—God takes us at our word; He rises into his own invisible and inconceivable majesty; He goes forth upon the ways which are not our ways, and retires into the thoughts which are not our thoughts; and we are left alone; and presently we say in our vain hearts, 'There is no God ‡.'"

* E. P. Hood. † In Ps. lxxiii. ‡ Ruskin.

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As with the primal idea of God, so with the belief in the future existence of the soul, what folly is it to turn from the children and to follow the sceptic in his self-created anxieties! Immortality with children as with the oldest philosophy of the East, according to the remark of Schlegel, is not a mere probability, deduced gradually, the result of study and reflection, nor some vague imagining of an undefined and shadowy world, but a conviction so certain and decided, that the idea of a future life becomes the recognized motive and impulse of all actions in this world, carried out even in the most trifling details. The child who has lost a brother will say to the grown-up waverer—

> "Your heart, dear stranger, is disquieted,
> And this is not the way that leads to quiet,
> To a deep quiet, such as we have found.
> It draws me on; I know not what to name it;
> Resistless does it draw me to his grave;
> There will my heart be eased, my tears will flow."

Hear what even the philosopher says: "To me, looking at the nature of the soul, it seems a much more difficult and obscure thought to conceive how the soul should be in the body as if in a strange house, than how when it leaves it, it should arrive at the free heaven, as if at its home. Though you do not see the soul of man any more than you see God, yet as you recognize God from his works, so from memory, and invention, and celerity of movement, and all the beauty of virtue, you can recognize the divine power of the soul,—'nisi plane in physicis plumbei sumus.' We cannot doubt but that there is nothing in mind mixed, concrete, coagulated; therefore it can neither be divided, nor separated, nor consequently can it die *."

Christ has risen. But is that a reason, asks the sceptic, why I should rise? "He is risen," replies St. Augustin, "in that flesh which He took from you and for you. Your nature, then, which was in Him, has preceded you in his person. That flesh has gone to heaven before you. Therefore by his resurrection He has really drawn us from the depths of the earth †." But existence, some one reasons, under a new and such a different

* Cicero, Tuscul. i. † In Ps. lxx.

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form! · It is appalling. "For surely," as Dr. Johnson says, "nothing can so much disturb the passions, or perplex the intellects of man as the disruption of his union with visible nature; a separation from all that has hitherto delighted or engaged him; a change, not only of the place, but the manner of his being." How do you know, a child replies, that our existence elsewhere is under such a different form? Why should I esteem you wiser than the poet when he says—

"Above this vast and admirable frame,
This temple visible, which world we name,
There is a world, a world of perfect bliss,
Pure, immaterial, yet resembling this.
A world, where all is found, that here is found,
But further discrepant than heaven and ground.
It hath an earth, as both this world and yours,
With creatures peopled, stored with trees and flow'rs;
It hath pure skies, it hath delicious air,
Moon, sun, and stars, heavens wonderfully fair."

But this, you say, we only fancy? Well, one thing we know. The same God who made this world, ourselves, and all that we see and love about us, made the other world, and all that it contains. Is it not probable, therefore, that, as there is such a homogeneity in all creation, the disparity in the next life won't be exactly what you now suppose it to be? If there be little resemblance between it and the present, we may certainly expect much conformity. Take the case of a man who delights in the paintings of some one particular artist. After remaining long in a room containing some of his productions, he is told coldly by some official that there is another room full of his pictures. What should you think of him if he were to refuse to leave the first room and pass to the second, and that, perhaps, partly because he did not like the face of the man who invited him to move on? Now the same artist whose works are in this first world, let who will have to tell us, has painted and created others which are in a second one, to which we are told to pass on. Is it not irrational to distrust, and keep back, and despond, and grow sulky, as if all were seen when we have spent some minutes, and those distracted ones, in this first life with many who did not care for what they saw? Besides, if you reject the

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child's consolations, pray, my good dear philosopher, what else have you? With the exception of some old traditions collected by Plato, which agree with the Christian doctrines, there is nothing in reserve to fall back upon. Come, be honest, you know well enough that mere nature has nothing for you but an eheu! There is no use, then, in being angry with the faith of the child, and the doctrine of his catechism.

But, again, what an unnecessary boldness is evinced by the mature sense, as it is called, of your long grown-up people, which makes light of the threats of religion, as if the very nature they oppose to it had not its threats also, which we see daily executed; one bad thing, if you will, thus combating another! "The demon," says St. Augustin, "puts into the head of men to ask, is it possible that God intends to save only a few?—taking care by the way not to specify how few,—that is, he says to men, heed not the commandments of God, you shall not die. But," adds St. Augustin, "beware lest the same thing should happen, if you believe him, that happened before; lest you should find that the threats of God were what they express, and the promises of the demon deceptive*." And, in fact, however we may dislike the Dantesque spirit, and wish to agree with the opinion of the Timæus, that what we consider faults are often diseases, and that intemperance in pleasure is not the consequence of voluntary guilt, still reason itself and common sense seem sufficient to overthrow the system of some modern philosophers respecting future impunity. "The well-meaning man among our more earnest thinkers," says a great author, "cannot unravel the mystery of the punishment of sin. But can he unravel the mystery of the punishment of no sin†?" If he clings to the latter, let him at all events shut up his Plato, and indeed nearly all his classics. Let him cease to hear of that Aridæus "who neither comes nor ever will come hither,"—meaning the abode of happy souls. Let him turn from the picture in the tenth of the Republic of those future punishments, in regard to which "is the whole danger of man‡." What books will he be able to open? For I can hardly suppose him content in other respects with those in which the conscience and traditions of the

* In Ps. lxxiii. † Ruskin. ‡ De Repub. x.

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human race are mute. Every where even the common natural judgment points in the same direction, as when the Duc de Saint-Simon speaks of those who loved evil for its own sake; "men of a black traitorous nature, deep to scrutinize, to follow, to seize, to destroy, and, in a word, mathematically detestable *;" or, as when solemnly invoking truth, he says of one in particular whom he intimately knew, "The serpent which tempted Eve, which, by her, circumvented Adam and ruined the human race, is the original of which this duke is the most exact, the most faithful, the most perfect copy, as far as a man can approach the qualities of a spirit of this first order, and of the chief of all the angels hurled from heaven. You know what was the demon, now look at the man †." It is the same testimony, similarly extorted, when a French lady, celebrated for the acuteness of her mind, as well as for the sensibility of her heart, says, in allusion to the death of La Brinvilliers, "It is not possible that she should be in Paradise; her villainous soul must needs be separated from others. Fancy what she must be, who was eight months killing her father, receiving all his caresses and all his pains, which she answers only by always doubling the dose ‡!" You have the same judgment expressed by a modern eloquent voice from the crowd, telling you in stronger than Christian language, "that scoundrel is scoundrel, that there is a fact which remains, whatever you may say, that the scoundrel cannot be made a friend of this universe, that the pity which ignores eternal justice is mere ignavia and cowardly effeminacy, maudlin laxity of heart, grounded on blinkard dimness of head, contemptible as a drunkard's tears." It adds a caution, saying, "that if you offend by such pity, the last consummation of the process will be terrible; that the penalties will come even in this life; that dim oblivion of right and wrong among the masses of your population will come; that doubts as to right and wrong, indistinct notions that right and wrong are not eternal but accidental, and settled by uncertain votings and talkings will come §." But, in short, whatever you may say of the poisoner and the scoundrel, whether you speak like all the

* T. ix.
† T. xii. 155.
‡ Lett. de M. de Sevigné.
§ Carlyle.

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world, and style them malefactors, or like a few philosophers, and consider them only fools for their pains (for we need not allude to those who dare to contradict the human reason, and find power in subtle art, to "clothe base guilt in the most glorious shape of innocence"); either way, such inquiries of which youth knows nothing, are idle and absurd, though all but the young seem to have a hankering to engage in them. Prithee, let Heaven alone, and let's say nothing. St. Anthony was one day considering the divine judgments, and anxious to know the number of the reprobate, and he heard a voice saying to him, "Anthony, Anthony, think about yourself, and leave God to settle with his creatures. He is wise enough, good enough, and powerful enough to do what ought to be done, without your teaching Him, or entering into his secrets." I don't want to deny the miracle; but I do maintain that all this is just what any common child or boy, with no wings to his shoulders, would have said to him.

But we need not remain longer dwelling on the wants of those who are opposed to the teaching in the Children's Bower, in regard to faith in general. It is sufficient to have remarked the fact, that many men stand in need of these lessons; for

> "Too oft the light that led our earlier hours,
> Fades with the perfume of our cradle flowers;
> The clear, cold question chills to frozen doubt;
> Tired of beliefs, we dread to live without;
> O then, if reason waver at thy side,
> Let humbler memory be thy gentle guide;
> Go to thy birthplace, and if faith was there,
> Repeat thy father's creed, thy mother's prayer*!"

Leaving then the region of those who need its lessons, let us hasten back to the bower, and observe with what force and beauty they are imparted.

Behold divineness no elder than a boy! What convent of barefooted Carmelites taught thee so much theology? Such is the question of Victorian to Preciosa. Facts daily justify the admiration and the curiosity. Rollin says, "I have seen chil-

* Holmes.

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dren amongst even the poorest answer on difficult matters of religion with a wonderful clearness, showing that their age is capable of any thing." But mark how every act of faith with the denizens of the bower, is a matter of the most pressing importance. They don't go through it as a formality. Evidently their whole heart is in it; you can see proof in the very way they hasten to the church and enter it. They seem to be of one family; and after losing some of them, when you see such little strangers, I defy you not to shed a tear amidst your smiles. Childhood's faith, and youth's faith, argue a mysterious presence, and seem to supersede the schools. The faith of children is the faith of Peter, to whom were addressed the words, "Beatus es quia caro et sanguis non revelavit tibi, sed Pater meus qui in cœlis est." They are happy? Why so? "Because," continues the Père de Neuville, "it is not the world that has been their master, their reason which has ruled their faith. It is not their ideas, their prejudices, their inclinations, which have formed their faith. But it is their heavenly Father who has instructed them." "Every man," says St. Hilary, "who disputes, who reasons, who scans, who judges the judgments of the Church, who decides after the decisions of the Church,—who from the tribunal of the Church appeals to the tribunal of his reason, of his opinions, of his pretended prophetic mission, is proved by that fact alone to have made shipwreck of his faith; because such a person does not receive his faith; he gives it to himself according to the desires of his heart and the prejudices of his mind. 'Fidem ipsi sibi constituunt non accipiunt.'" "Alas! I mourn," continues De Neuville, "the peril of those men who, in different ages of the Church, are seen delicate in their sense of morals even to scrupulosity, and little delicate as to faith; men who, in regard to virtues, wish to follow the most safe and painful roads; who in the desires of their hearts are the most restrained and captured, and who in matters of faith follow the most eccentric paths, paths which allow the most licence to curiosity and to the indocility of an unquiet and vagabond intelligence. Show your works, they will be told. They will produce works of benevolence and of mercy, works of mortification and penitence, works of gentleness and patience, works of sobriety and

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temperance, works of bashfulness and modesty, works even of zeal and of the love of order; but when, it will be added, 'ostende fidem tuam,' show your faith, it will be a faith proud and arrogant, the work of an indocile and imperious reason; of a science that is only vanity and haughtiness; of a presumptuous and obstinate mind, full of self-love and of self-confidence; a carnal and earthly faith, of which Jesus Christ was neither the motive nor the principle. It will be their faith; the faith of their reason and of their intelligence, of their enlightenment and of their knowledge; of their reflections and discoveries, of their study and examination; of their prejudices, and their own ideas; of their vanity and curiosity, of their ambition and their interest; the faith of flesh and blood." Such is not the faith of children; theirs is that of Peter.

When it is a question of contradicting their faith, childhood and youth have the firmness and constancy of martyrs. At Cocura, during a persecution, some one said to a little boy not five years old, "If the tyrant threatens you with death, will you deny the faith? No! he replied. What! would you be a martyr? Ay, that I would; and father and mother, and I with them, would be all martyrs. But you don't know what a martyr means? I do, though. It is to have my head cut off for Jesus Christ; and depend on it I should not cry, but stretch out my neck thus *." Without having read Cicero, the little people of the bower know well enough that it is not their country's laws that make a thing just. "If all the Athenians," says the philosopher, "should delight in tyrannic laws, would those laws on that account be just †?" However devoted to their fatherland, childhood and youth would be sure to give the right answer; and as for religious truth, they know without having heard living authors, that "if Adam's whole posterity were to vote daily on it till the world perish, it will not alter it a jot, even as sulphuric acid declines to become sweet milk, though you vote so to the end of the world." In general, one may say of them, however some of their elders may cavil, that like John the Baptist, they are great "coram Domino;"—

* Oultreman, Le Pedagogue chrestien.
† De Legibus i.

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"nothing greater," says De Neuville, "than the Christian child." But look at adults and grown-up men. The title of Christian is the first thing they will give up, to become what? Men of opulence and respectability, men of credit and authority; men of prudence and of policy, men of spirit and of boldness; men of talents and of merit, men of success and of reputation; perhaps, men of profound views, and of a kind of prophetic eloquence, by contradicting with eloquence all the world.

Children, without having ever heard or read the celebrated "Depositum Custodi" of Bossuet, which he preached at the Carmelites, observe and practise what he enforced in that memorable sermon. They keep the faith; keep it often amidst difficulties, that refer us for an explanation of the mystery of their power to the sacred words "custodiens parvulos Dominus." When young Alypius recovered, and was rallied for having been baptized by a former companion, he felt a horror, as St. Augustin tells us, for that companion, while he spoke to him, as if for an enemy, and admonished him to desist if he wished to have him any longer for a friend. If any one contradict the catechism before any of these children, it won't be for want of being set right by them that he will persist in his error. The delicate sense of devotion, too, which belongs to the young in regard to faith, is most observable. So also is their comprehensive reception of its mysteries. Their devotion to the mother of Christ, for instance, recalls the words "nihil est Virgine pulchrius Maria, nil admirabilius, nil suavius, nil amabilius, nil quod magis ad se hominum animos alliciat etiam improborum *."

Here might be long discourse respecting the faith of those two boys lately snatched from the bower; for of him nearest to them it could not be said—

ἐπεὶ οἱ παῖδες ὑπερφίαλοι καὶ ἄπιστοι.

After the death of the eldest this entry was found in his boyish diary: "Easter is always on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the 21st of March. This is Palm Sunday, and

* Bonifacius, Institutio Christiani Pueri.

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the offices in the church were beautifully performed." Such an entry is significative of the mind that sets a value on things of faith, and, coming as it did from a boy like him, it is to the purpose to notice it. In fact, this lad, externally so like every other, had the faith of a confessor. No human respect prevented him from any practice of devotion that he felt disposed to. In such a dashing youth, people used to remark, with a sort of surprise, the singular respect with which he always treated whatever was connected with faith. If he met a priest, he would leave those he was with to run across the street to greet him: heedless of what his own companions might be, he would pull up on the road when driving them, to have a little chat with him; he would speak to him in society with a respectful sweetness, that some of his elders might have done well to imitate. No one ever heard from his lips, in lightest moments, a word derogatory to the veneration of what is holy. Notwithstanding his fondness for light literature and books about the chace, there was no kind of reading that seemed to interest him more deeply than that of the annals of the propagation of the faith, of which he used to read, and carefully arrange the French numbers in order to have them bound in volumes, to prevent their being scattered or left in confusion, which was a thing in general that he deprecated, through a singular tact for having every thing about him in order and in its place; a trait of character not perhaps unworthy of mention. But we shall hear more of his faith later, when we shall have to recount the particulars of his death.

"The English," says Emerson, forgetting that there are more children and youths amongst them than grown-up people, "abhorring change in all things, abhorring it most in matters of religion, cling to the last rag of form, and are dreadfully given to cant. The English and the Americans cant beyond all other nations. The French relinquish all that industry to them." We may add, that childhood and youth no less relinquish it to the grown-up portion of their community. There is a little England that feels no necessity for cant. Having the substance in faith, young people need it not. They have an instinctive sense of being the native citizens of the Jerusalem that is above, which avowedly lays claim to them as to her

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most favoured sons. They have nothing to do, as a great writer says, with "noisy theoretic demonstrations and laudations of the Church," but a great deal with "some unnoisy, unconscious, and practical, total, heart-and-soul demonstration of a Church." Have then men in this respect nothing to learn from them? "If there is no atmosphere, what," asks the same author, "will it serve a man to demonstrate the excellence of lungs? How much profitabler when you can, like a youth, like a child, or, to take the instance he selects, like Abbot Samson, breathe, and go along your way*?" In the Shepherd of St. Hermas, we read, "The twelfth mountain, which was white, represents such as have believed like sincere children, into whose thoughts there never came any malice, nor have they ever known what sin was, but have always continued in their integrity. Wherefore this kind of men shall, without all doubt, inherit the kingdom of God. Whosoever shall continue as children, without malice, shall be more honourable than all those of whom I have spoken; for all such children are honoured by the Lord, and esteemed the first of all."

Wordsworth remarks in one of his letters, "that the consolations which children and young persons draw from religion," or, as he says, "from the Holy Scriptures, ought to be habitually on the minds of adults of all ages, for the benefit of their own souls; and," he adds, "that it requires to be treated in a loftier and more comprehensive train of thought and feeling, than by writers has been usually bestowed upon it." His recent biographer, after citing the words, proceeds to comment on them, saying, "Is not the life of childhood an everlasting problem? What keenness of thought! Without a sophism the child will perplex the most acute logician; and what a strong faith is there in the mind of a child! what bounding joyousness! what heart is there, what keenness of deduction, what power of imitation! what redundancy of fancy, what exuberance of love!" Coleridge has said of genius, that "its highest characteristic is to carry into mature age the feelings of childhood. In another state, shall we not return to that life? The highest voice that has spoken in our world, has declared of childhood, 'that of such

* Carlyle,

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is the kingdom of heaven*.'" But we have to confine our attention here to the faith of childhood and youth, which seems ever to verify the lines,

"——— to their capable ears
Silence was music from the holy spheres."

To them positive religion, religion organized, the only religion accessible to them, presents no difficulties; and St. Augustin appears to explain the reason, where he says, "God," whose work after all is that organization, "is good to those whose heart is right; while, as for others, He appears to them unjust †;" and, again, "God is with you as you are yourself. He will be good if you are good, and if you are wicked, you will believe Him to be wicked ‡." To the prevalence of childhood's views, which in primitive ages may be supposed to survive through all periods of life in some regards, may be ascribed, perhaps, the old German expression, "der liebe Gott," the dear God; the Anglo-Saxon name of God, as signifying good; the French "le bon Dieu;" and the Italian "Iddio benedetto;" all which terms, as Cardinal Wiseman remarks, convey a different impression from that of the modern English title of the Almighty. To the young, the idea of willing any thing better than what God wills is simply unintelligible. Lay before them any of the articles of faith, without which the religious sense would lead only to a vague mysticism, and you will find that in their estimation, with regard to that whole region, it is "all right," to use their own favourite phrase, when speaking of nearly every thing around them; while their elders, on the contrary, are apt to think, and often to predicate, in general, that 'tis all wrong. The ancient university of Paris said of the first age of man, "Scilicet ætas illa simplex, docilis, innocens, plena candoris et modestiæ, necdum imbuta pravis artibus, accipiendo Christi evangelio maximè idonea est." Childhood and youth in the middle ages were regarded with a sort of religious respect. It was thought that Christ used to sit by the side of St. Edmund when he was in the school, and converse familiarly with him. Such boyhood would present a fine study for those who would

* E. P. Hood. † In Ps. lxxii. ‡ In Ps. lxxiv.

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represent in painting faith and its influence on character. Christ welcomed children, and reproved those wise ones who would keep them back. Youth did its best to receive Him with applause on his entry into Jerusalem, just as the youth of our population would do its best to welcome Him if his arrival were to be announced for to-morrow; and Christ applied to the exulting voices of boys the Davidic words, "that out of their lips was praise perfected."

Grown-up people of all ages may learn from childhood and youth the habit of conscious intercourse with the supernatural side of life, and of seeing God's providential hand in all events and vicissitudes. This is what religion, to say nothing of wisdom, requires. "None of these things," says St. Augustin, "must be viewed with common eyes. Abraham did not deliberate; for he did not believe that God, who is all good, was ordering him to do what could be evil*." So it is with such youth:

> "Though earth be dust
> And vanish, though the heavens dissolve;—its stay
> Is in the Word that will not pass away."

Children are apt to believe, or rather they are incapable of not believing, that human things are governed by God, which belief, as even Plato shows †, is, what Christian authors proclaim it to be, one of the foundations of all virtue ‡. "Several natural causes were assigned hereof," says an old writer, speaking their language; "however, the cause of causes was Divine Providence." The common people in England, who in many respects resemble children, carry this idea so far, that they will even leave door and windows open in a storm, saying, in their simplicity, it is God who speaks in the thunder, and you must not close either in his face. The wisest, however, will agree so far with children in being of Hamlet's belief, that "there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow." "Il faut souhaiter," says another representative of the bower, "que Dieu s'en mêle; sans cela, tout est mauvais." Some of the

* In Ps. xxx.

† Leges x.

‡ Baldesani Stimul. Virtut. Adoles.

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ancient philosophers argue in support of these views in this manner: "God," say they, "must be employed about something admirable. But there is nothing more admirable than the government of the world. Therefore it is so governed." "Nulli est igitur naturæ obediens aut subjectus Deus; omnem ergo regit ipse naturam *." Plato, conversing, as he says himself, in a moderate manner, with him who loves to find fault with the "carelessness" of Providence, uses stricter logic and far nobler language, saying to his disciple, "You will never be neglected by it, not though you were so small as to sink into the depths of the earth, nor so lofty as to fly up to heaven †." But perhaps, after all, the humbler and more mysterious process by which a child arrives at the same conclusion proves the most effective. Mature manhood, at all events, need not disdain a trait of childhood, the imitation of which can not only minister the highest consolation to it at all times, but lead it to a most useful observation of the wonderful economy of the whole government of human life in each individual as well as in collective nations. "Whoever," says Madame de Sevigné, "would take from me the view of Providence, would take from me my sole good; and if I thought that it was in us to arrange, disarrange, to do, and not to do, I think I should not have a moment of repose. I must have the Author of the universe for the reason of all that happens: when it is with Him that I have to do, I have no concern with any one, and I submit, however it may be with grief and sorrow; my heart is wounded, but I suffer even these evils as being in the order of Providence."

Grown-up persons, again, whatever be their degree of mental culture, have, as we may have already gathered, much frequently to acquire from the faith of the bower respecting the human soul and its future existence, to which fact the attention of thoughtful men has often been called; as in the instance of Wordsworth's ode "On the Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Childhood." We don't want the Phædo in the bower, or the last lines of the Apology. "I can't think," little John used to say to his sister, with singular emphasis, and a certain air of manly gravity, repeating the words so as to

* Cicero, de Nat. Deor. † Leges x.

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express, even by his face, contempt for the contrary thought, "I can't think, May, that I shall ever die!" Prophetic assurance!

"——— O my love,
My breath of life, where art thou? High above,
Dancing before the morning gates of heaven."

You could not think it! no, nor can I think it.

"——— Thy parting soul
Spreads wing betwixt the mourner and the sky!
As if its path lay, from the tie last broken,
Straight through the cheering gateway of the sun;
And, to the eye strain'd after, 'tis a cloud
That bars the light from all things."

Thine was a love that dies not,

"A love—O God! it seems so—that must flow
Far as thou fleest; and, 'twixt heaven, and me,
Henceforward, be a bright and yearning chain
Drawing me after thee*!"

"There remains for the pacific," says St. Augustin, "something which he is to expect, as is said in the thirty-sixth Psalm. What is this that he has to expect? It is that when you are dead you will not be dead. Lo! that is what remains for you. There remains for you something after this life†." So the children sing,

"Life is real! life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not spoken of the soul‡."

Picus of Mirandula relates the different opinions on this subject that were held by the ancient philosophers. Proclus thought that only the rational part of the soul was immortal; while Xenocrates and Speusippus contended that the sensitive part was no less so. Speaking of the six books of Lucretius he says, "magno adolescentium exitio servati;" and he concludes by

* Willis. † In Ps. clxvii. ‡ Longfellow.

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inviting his readers to return thanks to Christ for having taught us, and for having established, by his Church, that souls are created for everlasting life *.

A belief in the resurrection of the body enters of course also into the faith of Christian childhood. At the scientific solidity of this double assurance we cast a glance in the beginning, so as to be dispensed from touching upon it now. Philosophers at the present day write books to show that indestructibility is one of the great truths proclaimed by nature and science †. The very titles they prefix to them are thus, to a certain extent, corroborative of what faith lays down. In some respects the genius of St. Augustin had forestalled them; for speaking of the resurrection of the body he says, "Let not this seem incredible; for if God was able to make us when we were not, will it be difficult for Him to repair us after we have been? You see the dead body corrupt before your eyes, and reduced to dust, but do you think it cannot rise again? All these members consumed, devoured, or burnt, are still whole before God. They are only resolved into the first elements of the world whence they were taken when we were made. We see them no more, but God knows how to draw them together one day; since before we were made He knew how to draw them from nothing ‡."

But we must not close these observations respecting the faith of the young without noticing the liveliness and constancy of their belief in heaven; for here again it can yield to maturer years a lesson, of which no one need dwell on the importance, since faith without hope must be ambiguous; and, indeed, what we shall now be presented with might have entered into the category of facts attesting how much might be learned from the hope as well as from the charity and faith of childhood.

"The natural flights of the human mind," says Johnson, "are not from pleasure to pleasure, but from hope to hope." A sense of the importance of having in this world of deceptions an ultimate hope is so natural to man, that we find it dictating words to Cicero which might be taken for those of a Christian

* Exam. Van. Doctrinæ Gentium, lib. i. 14.

† See the Works of H. P. Cooper, Lord Brougham, &c.

‡ In Ps. lxii.

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neophyte; for he says, "neque solum cum lætitia vivendi rationem accepimus, sed etiam cum spe meliore moriendi *." Hope, however, is, of all the virtues, that which is the most distinctively Christian, for it could not enter definitely into any Pagan scheme. In old sculpture it is represented, as on the ducal palace of Venice, by a figure, full of devotional expression, holding up its hands as in prayer, and looking to a hand which is extended towards it out of sunbeams †.

In the world, if you put cant aside, how few persons of mature age seem to entertain any real lively sense of the happiness of securing heaven! Many seem prepared to describe death as that severing of the last tie by the right hand of Iris, when

> "———————— omnis et unâ
> Dilapsus calor, atque in ventos vita recessit."

Mr. Ruskin, scouting the idea of spires having had any intentional reference to heaven, supposes that the men who built them "had very feeble desires respecting their entrance therein ‡." The secret feeling in general appears to be that expressed by Achilles in Homer, who, when interrogated as to his state in the other world, replied that he would prefer the meanest, poorest life on earth to a kingdom in the shades. Mature manhood might often say with Autolycus, "For the life to come, I sleep out the thought of it." "O God, Thou knowest my folly!" says the Psalmist §. "It is Christ," adds St. Augustin, "who so speaks in the name of the whole body. For all our Christian life seems a folly. But look at the labourer throwing his seed on the ground. Who would not take this action for folly if he did not know what was the custom of labourers, and what this was to produce? The hope of the harvest causes it to be no folly. So it is with us ||." When we turn to children and to youth, we find what the Apostle speaks of, "the reality of the things we hope for, and the evidence of things unseen." Above all, the belief in heaven is observed to be something very different from that confused faint notion which seems to be in the

* De Legibus ii. † Stones of Venice. ‡ Ib.
§ Ps. lxviii. || Ib.

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mind of long grown-up elder people. "Heaven," as some one beautifully says, "is first a temper and then a place." It is, however, to the young, who realize it in regard to the former, not a vague conception in reference to the latter, but, as the Germans would say, an objective reality, just as much as their own home on earth is one. Their sense of its reality might be said to resemble that impression which comes over you when for the first time, with a powerful telescope directed to the moon or to some shining planet, you feel that you can with all your senses about you, as it were, actually go out of this world and behold another. To children thus inspired, this present life is accepted and understood perfectly as being intended only for a passage to it. Coplas de Manrique expresses this sense with not more beauty than accuracy, saying—

"This world is but the rugged road
Which leads us to the bright abode
Of peace above;
So let us choose that narrow way
Which leads no traveller's foot astray
From realms of love.

"Did we but use it as we ought,
This world would school each wandering thought
To its high state.
Faith wings the soul beyond the sky,
Up to that better world on high,
For which we wait *."

It was the maxim of St. Louis de Gonzague and of St. Stanislas Kostka, the two patrons of youth, that they were not born for present but for future things,—"non sum natus præsentibus sed futuris. Quidquid æternum non est nihil est." "Despise the present," says St. Augustin, "in which you live a passing life, lest in attaching yourself to it the present should prevent you from enjoying the future †." Without any acquaintance with such passages, it is certain that childhood and youth are often

* Longfellow. † In Ps. lvii.

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so actuated by a sense of the truth which they convey, as to merit having addressed to them the lines—

"Earth may not claim thee. Nothing here
Could be for thee a meet reward;
Thine is a treasure far more dear—
Eye hath not seen it, nor the ear
Of living mortal heard,—
The joys prepared—the promised bliss above—
The holy presence of Eternal Love*!"

Each child, while sitting in the bower, might be supposed whispering to his companion such secrets as Hein expresses in these charming lines—

"I doat on the lake, I doat on the vale,
So fair and pleasant are they;
But, somehow, my glances never fail
From earth to the hills to stray;

"The lake is so blue, and the vale is so green,
The hills are icy and cold,
But up I am drawn by a power unseen,
That never will be controll'd.

"They are watch-towers set on this earth below
By Heaven in its boundless love;
The road from the plain do those mountains show
To yon blue glory above.

"They show to the trav'ller the upward path—
Methinks that on me they call,
Steep sides and sharp ridges the mountain hath,
Yet up to the sky o'er all!"

How many young persons resemble that Mademoiselle Reimond, of whom Madame de Sevigné speaks, who was living in a convent of the Faubourg St. Germain, "Elle sort quand elle veut; mais elle ne le veut guère, parcequ'elle a principalement dans la tête de vouloir aller en Paradis!" But here is another affecting example more in point. "When Isabella," says Prescott, "heard that she was to die in the flower of her youth, she

* Whittier.

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said, 'In heaven I have always trusted; nor am I so wedded to the pomps and glories of the world that I cannot now willingly resign them.' To the French ambassador she said, 'You see me in the act of quitting this vain world to pass to a more pleasant kingdom, where I hope to be for ever with my God. Tell my mother, the queen, and the king, my brother, to bear my death with patience, and that no happiness on earth has ever made me so content as the prospect now does of approaching my Creator. I shall soon be in a better situation to do them service, and to implore God to take them and my brothers under his holy protection. I will pray heaven in its mercy to grant that they may take my death with patience, and hold me for happy.'"

The firm hope of securing heaven as a real tangible inheritance is very observable in children. You remember what was related of little John, and how he used to say to his governess, "When I see you come to heaven, after pulling you about so here, and pouring flour on you, and tying you to a tree, how I shall laugh then! But God will not be angry, for I shan't be able to refrain. As for me," he used to say, "I shall, I must, go to heaven, I will go to heaven. Mamma says we can do there what we like. I wonder if I shall be able then," he added archly, "to drive a cart in heaven! that would be jolly." He loved to play with his own thoughts, and he could distinguish what were toys; and then sometimes at the thought of not going to heaven, for he had heard in sermons that many would never get there, he could not take his tea. At the moment of his flight, a little one, the darling of his soul, as if directed by some instinctive or angelic knowledge of what was passing below, started from her bed in an upper room, flew down to him, wept hysterically, clasping her hands; then, seeing by the silent quiet looks of others, that he had actually passed away, "He is happy now, is he not?" she frantically asked. "Yes." "Then I'll cry no more,—no, never again. John is in heaven, for ever happy;" and she put on a look of composure that was truly wonderful and sublime. "I'm quite happy" were among the latest words of his eldest brother four months afterwards. For three hours that youth held in his hand a lighted taper, symbol of his faith, and no one could induce him to relinquish

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it. But we are anticipating things that must be related further on. Let us for the present drop them.

The observers of such scenes partake, at the moment at least, in general in the confidence of these expectants. "Oh, I wish I were in his place!" said many of his fellow-students when they saw Edmond de Laage exposed on his bed after death. The room was never empty. All had a conviction that he was gone to heaven*. St. Gregory said, that the heavenly seats vacant by the fall of the angels were filled chiefly by the multitude of children and youths. The common people every where seem to have the same impression respecting the bliss reserved for them the moment they pass hence. Have you never observed that there are persons whose value seems to us to increase exactly in proportion as we think of heaven? Amongst such in general are children. They accept this faith and hope with all their practical immediate consequences. They will not, if they can help it, permit their elders to mourn like others, or even, what is so natural, to feel pity. Ulysses pities all those whom he sees in the shades. He sees his friend Elpenor, and he pities him—

Τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ δάκρυσα ἰδὼν, ἐλέησά τε θυμῷ.

He sees his own mother, and he pities her—

Τὴν μὲν ἐγὼ δάκρυσα ἰδὼν, ἐλέησά τε θυμῷ.

He sees Agamemnon, and he pities him—

Τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ δάκρυσά τ' ἰδὼν, ἐλέησά τε θυμῷ.

The friend of little John must not use such language, whatever his heart may dictate. Were he now to confess, sitting in the half-deserted bower, that when he thought of youth so suddenly cut down, he pitied John, pitied Thomas, there is a little voice that would cry out against him, exclaiming, "What folly to say so! Oh, no! they are much happier than we are." Keep to yourself what Pagans describe,—the shades, the "tristes sine sole domos, loca turbida." We have heaven. Ay! but they were so joyous here, so made for this light, so formed to gladden all the

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul.

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world. "How wrong of you," the same little monitors would continue, talking like the common people, "how very wrong of you to take on like that! Why I'm sure little John would not come back to us if he could. I know he would not." Such impressions might furnish a sublime commentary on that passage of the Cratylus where, the etymology of Pluto being explained, it is said, "desire is stronger than necessity, and it is this former bond which alone is strong enough to keep many from flying from Hades. The spirits remain there through such desire of the beautiful discourses which Pluto knows how to utter, that not one of those is willing to come hither, not even the syrens themselves,—all being enchanted,—so purified are they, and inflamed with the desire of good; whereas, if they possessed the flutterings and mad feelings of the body, not even his father, Kronos, would be able to detain them with him." Children's talk about heaven is sublime, and, indeed, enchanting. Then they will sometimes add personal observations, or whatever else one ought to call them, strange as they are inspiring. Come, they will say, sit down here,

> "And I will tell thee stories of the sky,
> And breathe thee whispers of its minstrelsy."

"About a month after John's death, between the 30th and 31st of July, I saw John," one of them will continue, "in a dream, or, rather, I think I saw him without dreaming, for I knew perfectly where I was, and all about every thing; and you know some one says that when a person dreams that he dreams, he is already half awake, and I felt at the time that I did not dream. I could only see his head; I could not look at it, it was so brilliant; he wore something round it. I thought that mamma and grandmamma seemed stupified, and that Anne, the servant, fainted. I said, 'Won't you speak to me, John?' He smiled, stretched out his hand to me, and off he went." It was like Beatrice, who merely looks down for an instant on Dante, and answers with a single smile, then "towards the eternal fountain turns."

Again I am anticipating things that must be related more fully later. I shall have no scruple, however, in repeating mention of them when the time comes for it.

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The religion of the ancient world trampled on feeling, and thought to ascend above it; Christianity incorporates feeling in its faith. Children say,

> "———————— we may believe
> That we shall know each other's forms hereafter,
> And, in the bright fields of the better land,
> Call the lost dead to us *."

From the hope, then, as well as from the faith of children, there is much to learn, vast intellectual and moral force to acquire; for these glorious inspirations can be caught from others, and perpetual sober reason will only afterwards confirm their verdict. "How many things has God already given," says St. Augustin, "that are promised in the Scripture! Who can number them? He has spoken there of the Church, and we see it. He has spoken there of the destruction of idols, and one sees no more of them. He has said there that the Jews would lose their kingdom, and we see it has come to pass. He has predicted there that there would be heretics, and we see them. He has spoken there of the recompense of the good, and we may believe that, having found Him faithful in all the rest, He will not in this last point deceive us †."

On the whole, I think, if there were nothing else to learn in the Children's Bower but this art of giving objective reality in the mind to the idea of heaven, men would do well to leave all in order to visit it, and graduate at it. Yes, men, I say, would do well,—men, who, as Homer remarks, and as others, without having been to Troy, will feel, are the most wretched of all living creatures on the face of the many-feeding earth. Let them turn to children, and think, and believe, and hope with children. When all is said and done, they will only be better logicians, deeper philosophers, or, if they will, greater rationalists for doing so. As St. Augustin says, "Let them raise towards heaven a heart that can only be wretched upon earth. The only way of preventing the heart from corrupting is to raise it to God. If you had corn in a low damp place, you would move it to a

* Willis. † In Ps. xxxix.

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higher to preserve it; and yet you suffer your heart to rot upon the earth. Do for your heart what you would do for your wheat. Raise it to heaven *."

Then, how like a child's in its simplicity, like a man's in its earnest solemnity and depth, will be the great antique heart! "Heaven," as a living author says, "will lie over him wheresoever he goes or stands on the earth, making all the earth a mystic temple to him, the earth's business all a kind of worship; while within him will reign a great law of duty, high as that heaven's splendour over his head, dwarfing all else, annihilating all else."

In closing this chapter let us observe more attentively that the lessons in respect of faith at the Children's Bower are obtained, not alone indirectly by witnessing and hearing what passes there, but also, as we have just incidentally seen, in a positive manner by the voices of the young, which often confirm men in faith or lead them back to it. A child, like little John, stay of our steps in this life, and guide to all our blessed hopes hereafter, absolutely calls on us to see and hear what is divine. He seems to have a mission "illuminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra sedent," so that one may apply to him the words of St. Augustin, "corruscasti, et splenduisti, et rupisti surditatem meam." Great things might many a father have learnt when, like Nestor, he sat σὺν υἱάσιν. His teachers then would not resemble that amateur coquetting with truth, who gave good advice to Xerxes without following it himself; to whom Seneca alluding exclaims, "Quam miserabilis gens, in qua nemo fuit qui verum dicere regi, nisi qui non dicebat sibi!" Philosophers themselves are struck with that trait of young people which leads them to impart to others what they know. "In children, too, we can perceive," says one of them, "how the desire of communicating knowledge is implanted in our nature to conduce to important ends. They find a positive pleasure as well in teaching others what they knew not before, as in learning what they did not know themselves. The child's mind affords much more food for admiration than any of the phenomena of the material creation. Shall we deny that the eye

* In Ps. lxxxv.

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could be made without skill in optics, and yet admit that the mind could be fashioned and endowed without the most exquisite of all skill, or could proceed from any but an intellect of infinite power*?"

"Children and boys are not alone themselves religious," says Bonifacius, "but they often infuse religion into men. How many of them surpass men in regard to it! In modern times," he continues, "how often has a little son caused a father to be, as it were, regenerated, brought back to Catholicism and to a sound mind! We have known not a few who changed their opinion, and returned to the bosom of the Church, moved either by the persuasion or the example of boys, who, when they beheld them in that light age so solidly founded in faith, in spite of all contradiction and opposition, concluded that truth must be on their side, and that the cause of Catholics was defended by God. At Munich a certain man of the Epicurean sect happening to enter a chapel where a confraternity of children performed their devotions, observing their piety and attention manifest in their countenances, began to think that he must himself be in error, and that he ought to imitate their veneration. He thought no human cause could account for their piety, and he concluded that it was the work of God, who out of the mouth of infants perfecteth praise. Accordingly, he sung his palinode, and ever afterwards frequented with holy dispositions the sacred mysteries of our religion†." Such children would teach or admonish even after their death. Thus a little girl in full health, though a short time before her departure, taking leave of the poet Hein at Andernach, gave him both her hands, and said, "Thou art still good Henry, but when thou becomest wicked think of little Veronica dead." The words, as well they might, struck him to the soul; and, in fact, she died soon after having spoken them. Here is a boy of eight years who would lead all others to a sense of faith,—need I add that it is little John,—most praised, most loved, a sample to the youngest; and to the graver a child that guided dotards? How

* Lord Brougham.

† Bonifacius, Institutio Christiani Pueri, &c.

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often has he and his elder brother received with joy the mission to speak to others conveyed in such words as—

"They will attend it better in thy youth
Than in a nuncio of more grave aspect!"

Antoine Malot had this zeal for the salvation of souls in an eminent degree. He loved to hear of conversions; and he used to ask for the prayers of others in behalf of those who needed them*. Childhood and youth inherit that spirit which Mascaron described when saying, "Turenne, conqueror of the enemies of the state, never caused France such a lively and universal joy as Turenne conquered by truth, and subdued to the yoke of faith." Oh, what would be a nation if its whole heart were always thus like the heart of one child! Bernardinus and Alexander Benitius, the Florentines, when mere juveniles, used to instruct other children, and repeat to them what they had learned. Similarly we read of the little boy Achaz, that when he saw his parents quarrelling, he used to shed tears; and whenever they did any thing wrong before him, that he used to say, "Does not our priest declare in his sermons that they who do such things will never possess the kingdom of God†?" With such directors one may say of the man who would disparage faith—

"Ne drede him not, do him no reverence,
For though he armed be in mayle
The armes of this childish eloquence
Schal perse his brest, and eek his adventayle."

Even in their death and after it such children often lead men to have faith. Persons who beheld the dead body of Henry d'Osseville, who died in his tenth year, were converted by the sight. Many who saw his body laid out went to confession, and dated their restoration to true life from that hour‡. It was the same at the death of little John; the sight of that sweet little cold face and of those innocent lips, from which all colour had fled, moved the mountains.

* Souvenirs de St. Acheul. † Adolescens Mariano-Academicus.
‡ Souvenirs de St. Acheul.

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In fine, to close this chapter with a passage from St. Augustin, applied to our especial purpose, we may compare these children to the birds of which the prophet speaks. "They are of three sorts," he says, "the pelican, the owl, and the sparrow; and of three sorts of places, the desert, the hole in a wall, and the roof of a house. The child becomes all of these. Let him be with persons who are not Christians and the proud, he is a pelican in the desert; let him be with those who have fallen into sins, he is an owl in the hole of the wall; for his charity does not forsake the darkness of those who dwell with night; he tries to win these sombre souls. Is he with Christians, but with tepid ones? he is a sparrow on the house-top, making his merry voice to be heard there, raised above flesh and blood in purity and innocence *." Now these are the birds that can make us soar whither we all would be; for, as a great contemporary says, "I do not want cheaper cotton, swifter railways, I want what Novalis calls, God, Freedom, Immortality." Will the world opposed to these voices of the bower help me towards that?

In conclusion of the chapter, and to sum up its contents in one word, we may say that the atmosphere of the Children's Bower is faith. What more could be advanced to urge the supreme importance of repairing to it, as to the very vestibule of the good, to breathe that atmosphere, to be acclimated to that atmosphere as our true native air, to enable us to imbibe the inspirations of genius, the philosophy of life, and, in fine, to obtain what is the ultimate object of all man's thought and of all human wishes—Heaven!

* In Ps. ci.

END OF VOL. I.

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